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HUMANITARIANISM IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH
LITERATURE


BY

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THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY

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CHAPTER I.

ENGLISH HUMANITARIAN TEMPER BEFORE 1726.

1. The normal English attitude toward animal life in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance.
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1.

There is an old tale of Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, which tells how, when he lay at the point of death from wounds, his leech asked for a captured Saracen to experiment upon, in that way, perhaps, to find a cure for the king. But Baldwin refused to permit even an infidel to be sacrificed that he might live, and the leech was forced to satisfy himself with the vivisection of a bear instead. "Then said the king, 'We will not strain at the beast if need be; do therefore as thou wilt.' . . . Let this suffice concerning the king's pitifulness." (1)

In this legend from Guibert de Nogent, written in the twelfth century, we find an interesting example of respect for

(1) Coulton, Mediaeval Garner. no. 18

human life in a time when the brotherhood of Christendom was none too clearly recognized and when pagans' lives were deemed worthy of no consideration whatever. By his "pitifulness" the king recognized the sacredness of the human body. Even when it came to the animal he apparently was dubious, but he was willing to permit the experiment "if need be". The legend, or historical fact --- the authenticity of the story aside from point of time does not matter --- shows that this respect for life is not characteristic of these last two centuries only, which have shown increased sensitiveness to the deliberate infliction of pain for dubious ends.

Hartland has an interesting theory that the savage considers animal motives and mental reactions to be exactly like our own. (2) In the stories of primitive peoples both man and beast act in precisely the same way and for the same reasons. This theory, however, applies only to the folk literature of races; and in this essay I shall concern myself only with more sophisticated writers in my attempt to show the normal attitude of man toward other species, disregarding those earlier times in which he was unconscious of any gulf between them. We shall meet a conception of equality of the species again among the eighteenth century sentimentalists. In that highly sophisticated age, we shall find a realization of the gulf, of course, and man acting the role of benevolent dictator.

In our earliest extant literature, particularly in

(1) E. S. Hartland, Popular Studies in Mythology, Romance and Folklore, no. 7.

Beowulf and Cynewulf (1), mention is made of man's companionship with animals, but this friendliness was generally confined to dogs and the hawk on his perch in the hall. Horses were highly valued, principally because they were of practical importance. Of all those animals dwelling in the mysterious forests near the sea-coasts there was fear born of the unknown --- fear like our modern attitude toward insects, disgust and suspicion intermingled.

In the Middle Ages the hawk was held in still greater esteem than in Anglo-Saxon days. In the mediaeval stronghold the lap-dog was popular, even though he might be useless for the chase; and every lady, mewed in her dingy apartments, had her caged magpie to amuse her. Women were clever at hunting with birds, John of Salisbury tells us, (2) and adds that the inferior sex is superior at the sport because women are more rapacious. We are left in doubt as to what his motives were for this criticism, whether he was indignant about idle killing or whether he

(1) In the Riddles there are many charming pictures to illustrate the friendship between the species, like this one of the nightingale:

Many varied voices voice I through my bill;
Holding to my tunes, hiding not their sweetness ---
I, the ancient evening-singer, bring unto the Earls,
Blithe within the burghs, when I break along
With a cadenced song. Silent in their dwelling
They are sitting, leaning forwards.

(2) Quoted by Wright, Womankind in Western Europe, 230. "Quod vel ex eo mecum conjicies quod deterior sexus in avium venatione potiar est. In quo poteris naturam arguere, nisi nesses quia deteriora semper promiora sunt ad rapinam."

wanted to rebuke women for frivolity. The latter supposition is the more plausible.

In the thirteenth century we are given a glimpse of the monastic attitude toward animals when the author of Ancren Riwle addresses his three pious ladies, "Ye shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except only a cat." (1) Anchoresses were to emulate Mary, not Martha, who busied herself about many things. That nuns in general were fond of pets is obvious from the numerous reports of episcopal and diaconal visitations. One rule at Chatteris, Cambridgshire, is quite specific on this point.

"Nuns shall not keep fowls, dogs or small birds within the convent precincts, nor bring them into church during divine service, and they shall not, from a wish to reform them, take in- to their employ servants who are known for their bad ways." (2)

This custom of taking one's pets with him when he went to mass was not uncommon; particularly was this true of hawks, which required a good deal of pampering.

Another example of mediaeval fondness for animals is found in Chaucer's description of the prioress, who must have been just such another amiable lady as those of the Ancren Riwle. She was so "pitous" that she would weep for an entrapped mouse "if it were deed or bledde", and her "smale houndes" dined royally on roasted meat and fair bread.

"But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smerte."

(1) Ancren Riwle, p 417

(2) Eckenstein, Women under Monasticism, p 401 (quoted). See Dugdale's Monasticon, Chatteris.

In telling of this characteristic of the lady prioress, Chaucer uses the word, conscience, which in connotation is identical with the eighteenth century word, sensibility. In this respect, she was thoroughly representative of her class.

In the fifteenth century there is evidence of this kindly spirit not in the monastery or the feudal castle but at the courts of kings. Sir Thomas More's character, Raphael Hythodaye, reports the views of the Utopians regarding animals and their slaughter. Shelley might not have been perfectly happy among these idealized peoples, for certainly they were not vegetarians; but they permitted only slaves to slaughter animals, "because they think it blunts the tenderness and affections of human nature, and little by little those qualities would deteriorate in the nation at large." (1) Then Raphael adds, apropos of hunting:

"But if the hope of slaughter and tearing the animal in pieces is the object (of hunting), should you not rather be moved to pity to see a poor innocent hare done to death by a dog --- the weaker by the stronger, the timid by the fierce, the innocent by the cruel and unmerciful? All such hunting is unworthy of free and responsible men, and the Utopians have relegated it to their butchers, to which trade they appoint slaves only."
(2)

The Utopians were unable to conceive of a merciful God who delighted in animal sacrifices, for surely He could not be pleased with their deaths when He gave these animals life. (3)

(1) More's Millenium, p 127. (2) Ibid, p 162. (3) Ibid, p 245.

Shakespeare, too, occasionally puts humanitarian ideas into the mouths of his characters. He felt particularly compassionate for the hare and deer.

Duke, senior. Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,
Being native burghers of this desert city,
Should in their own confines with forked heads
Have their round haunches gored. (1)

Here is an idea which might as well have been voiced by an eighteenth century poet as well as by Shakespeare, were it developed more fully and not merely a passing fancy of the duke. It implies quite in the eighteenth century manner, that here on earth we all have certain rights and that any who would interfere with us are tyrants. Among those who have such rights are "the poor dappled fools" that Shakespeare loves so well. "Poor Wat", the hare, is also described with compassion when he "stands on his hinder legs with listening ear" to see if the hunter still pursues. (2)

The foregoing examples are given to show that the humane spirit has been present throughout the centuries of English literature, though without having become a creed for a school of writers. The English poet has normally had no quarrel with the life about him, nor has the average Englishman, for that matter, though hunting has ever been a favorite sport and probably always will be. Generally he has not gone out of his way to

- (1) As You Like It, Act II, I, 1 21 ff
(2) Venus and Adonis, 1 697 ff

fight with animals. This spirit of mutual toleration is a part of human nature, present not only among the Anglo-Saxons but in Greece, Rome, and the Orient. At times in English literature it has been absent but never entirely degenerate.

The purpose of this essay, having determined what man's general attitude has been, is to examine the literature of the periods from 1660 to 1726, the Restoration to the publication of Thomson's Winter, and from 1726 to the Lyrical Ballads, to discover in both periods what the deviation from the normal has been.

From 1726 on, the sentimentalists did not confine themselves to pitying the tearful and faithful spouses of Colley Cibber and Richard Steele. Their compassion became more catholic. It is within the scope of this essay to trace English humanitarianism both as it was concerned with lower animals and with the savages of Africa and America, to consider the causes of the movement, to examine its relationship to the anti-slave trade agitation to the end of the century. The publication of the Lyrical Ballads is selected as a stopping point, because at that time the work of the humanitarian poets and novelists was at its height. In the nineteenth century many of their dearest wishes were realized and the reforms they sought consummated. The slave trade was abolished; then slavery was stamped out. The right of democratic self-expression gradually became universal in Anglo-Saxon countries, and new problems presented themselves for solution.

2.

In the late seventeenth century there was a deviation from the normal attitude just described --- a deviation attributable to the peculiar interests of that age which valued sanity rather than sentiment. It is necessary to describe this period in order to contrast it with the era of sensibility which came in the eighteenth century.

The scientific spirit was abroad in Europe after the Renaissance, and men, as if awakening from a long sleep, were more observant than ever before of physical and biological phenomena about them. Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood. Bacon had apotheosized the inductive method as a means for the discovery of natural truths. As the explorations of the previous hundred years had stimulated men's imaginations in regard to new worlds, so Harvey and Bacon paved the way for discoveries in the natural sciences. Curiosity was more lively than it had ever been before. Men tried many things, and their appetites for marvels knew no satiety. When the Stuarts returned in 1660, they encouraged scientific inquiry. Their courtiers brought with them news of a similar movement in France to urge the English scientists to still greater endeavor. The Royal Society flourished. Experimentation became fashionable.

In France during this century there arose the famous mechanistic theory of Descartes, who, in order to endow man with a soul, was forced, by discretion, to declare all other animals

automata, like clocks. In England the mechanistic doctrine gained some adherents, but there is scant evidence of their having gone to the extremes of Malebranche, Antoine Arnauld, and the other Port Royalists. Said Malebranche, "They (animals) eat without pleasure; they cry without pain; they increase without consciousness of it; they desire nothing; and if they act with dexterity and in a manner indicative of intelligence, it is God who motivates them to preserve them." (1) Sainte Beuve illustrates Malebranche's practical application of the theory by an interesting anecdote. As he came out of his house one day, his dog, about to have puppies, fawned upon him in expectation of a caress. Malebranche kicked her. As she went yelping away, he said tranquilly, "Eh, quoi! ne savez-vous pas bien que cela ne sent pas?" (2) Her cries were but the rumble of wheels, like the creak of the spit.

In England the struggles between the automatists and their opponents were never very exciting, which is strange, for never before had the cultivated men of the two countries been in closer cultural accord. But after 1660 the learned societies of England and France were absorbed in experiments with blood transfusion. Vivisection of every variety became a matter of common occurrence, but it was not confined to the surgical laboratory. The dilettantes,

(1) Quoted by Huxley, *Methods and Results*, ch. V from Meditations Metaphysiques et Correspondence de N. Malebranche. I have been unable to find this selection.

(2) Sainte Beuve, Port-Royal, v II p 316-17

practically without scientific knowledge, carried the new activity into the drawing-rooms and enlivened smart functions by disembowelling living dogs for the edification of the quality. (1) They were magicians conjuring gold fish out of silk hats.

Said a writer in Philosophical Transactions, "We have been ready for this Experiment these six Months, and wait for nothing but good opportunities, and the removal of some considerations of a Moral nature." (2) (That is, for the experiment of blood transfusion into the body of a man.) In the dispute as to who had first performed the operation, the English were forced to concede the honor to the French, but they maintained that a laudable scrupulosity and a respect for the "Penalties of the Law", more strict in England than in France, had detained them. Within six months after, however, Dr. King had found his man, a feeble-minded cleric, and had operated successfully, November, 1667. (3)

It would be grossly unfair to the scientific pioneers of England to deny them credit for brilliant research and discovery. It was chiefly among the dilettantes that the custom became deplorable. Animals not only were opened without purpose, but they were given no care after the experiments were performed.

(1) Philosophical Transactions, v I and II. Pepys and Boyle tell similar stories.

(2) Ibid, v II. p 522.

(3) Pepys, v VII, p 197; Phil. Trans. v II, p 557

The Hon. Robert Boyle, in spite of his distinguished services to the cause of learning, habitually seems to have examined the interior workings of his specimens, sewed them up, and released them with no apparent attempt to see that the incisions were properly healed. Long after the result of such an experiment was well known, animals were stifled in air pumps, to satisfy, one suspects, only a fruitless and aimless curiosity. After the spleen of an animal had been removed or after his blood had been let, he was released to go his way, no effort being made to do more than to sew up the wound. (#) But to Boyle this was a man's world, so created by God, who has upon occasion made the sun to stand still and has suspended other natural laws for the benefit of the human race. (1)

Pepys tells how Charles II obtained the body of a natural child, apparently the offspring of some court lady, which was dissected by the Merry Monarch with many a sprightly jest. (2) John Evelyn escorted many great ladies and peers to the dissecting rooms at Gresham College, where experiments were performed especially for them, among his guests being her grace of Newcastle, "a mighty pretender to learning". (3) There was much of this idle drawing-room diletantism among the noble virtuosi, for whom Charles Stuart set the fashion.

(#) Phil. Trans. v I, p 352.

(1) Boyle, v II, p 12, Usefulness of Natural Philosophy.

(2) Pepys, v III, p 41.

(3) Evelyn, v I, p 26.

There were, of course, many who attacked the legitimate activities of investigators, but without much distinction between the serious and the frivolous. Among the apologists were Thomas Sprat and John Dryden, both of whom have paid high tribute to the scientific spirit.

"Among th' assertions of free reason's claim,
Th' English are not the least in worth or fame." (1)

Then follows high praise of Harvey, Bacon, and Dryden's colleagues in the Royal Society. Sprat replies to those who cast aspersions on the new method. The scientists are not godless or visionary or ridiculous. But nothing is said in defense of useless vivisection or of disavowal of amateur experimentation. Since there are many pages devoted to the Society's defense without any such mention, certainly there could have been few attacks on those two scores. (2) There were, indeed, some rumors that vivisection of men had been forbidden, for Jean Denis wrote from Paris in 1667-68, to find if this were true; but the rumor was emphatically denied in Philosophical Transactions, which declared that there was no protest and certainly no legal attempt to forbid it. (#)

Shadwell, in The Virtuoso, satirizes this whole class of energetic seekers after seemingly esoteric information in the person of Sir Nicholas Gimcrack, who was to dissect, after the mode, at his town house. The evening festivities were to conclude with "a dish of tea, meat, and discourse of the noble Operation, and to sport an author over a Glass of Wine." (3) Samuel

(1) Dryden, To My Honor'd Friend, Dr. Charleton. (2) Hist. of R.S.
(#) Phil. Trans. V II, p 710
(3) Virtuoso, Act I, p 7

Butler attacks the virtuosi in The Elephant and the Moon and in A Satire on the Royal Society, but like S hadwell he holds no brief for those who went beneath the knife, either man or beast.

Now membership in the learned associations of England was not confined to eager scholars and bored aristocrats. There was a community of interests among scientists and literati in the late seventeenth century, such as never since obtained, at least not to the same extent. In the list of fellows of the Royal Society before 1700 appear the names of John Dryden, Edmund Waller, Thomas Sprat, Edward Stillingfleet, and Lord Chesterfield, all of them remembered in the annals of literature and philosophy rather than in experimental science. This is undoubtedly one reason for the absence of emotion in the poetry of the period, though certainly it is not the only one. The writers gained clarity and a wider horizon at the sacrifice of feeling. An examination of the Philosophical Transactions after 1750 will show the scientific interest inclining to physical investigation rather than biological. Certainly we should have had the humanitarians "hymning in full choir" if the conditions of the first decade after the Restoration still obtained.

It is Addison who first among the distinguished literary men of the early eighteenth century stated his disapproval of the careless treatment of animal life by the pseudo-scientists. Addison was a believer in the mechanistic theory, but he did not follow Descartes' automatism to extremes. Animals are governed by instincts, and Deus est anima brutorum. He has small patience

with pretenders to scientific erudition.

"There are, besides the above-mentioned innumerable retainers to physic, who, for want of other patients, amuse themselves with the stifling of cats in an air-pump, cutting up dogs alive or impaling insects upon the point of a needle for microscopical observations; besides those that are employed in the gathering of weeds, and the chase of butterflies (1)

There is a report in the Spectator of an experiment in which the investigators, to demonstrate mother love, showed her puppies to a dog then being dissected alive. The details are much like those mentioned before; but Addison begs pardon for mentioning this "very barbarous experiment" and this "instance of cruelty." (2)

3.

In the first decades of the eighteenth century we find the two goddesses, classicism and experimental science, still enthroned; physicians like Garth were writing poetry, and at such gatherings as Dr. Arbuthnot held at St. James's there was no divorce between letters and laboratory. The presence of the research method in literature accounts for the small regard paid to the lower species in the poetry of the period, but the time had come for the pendulum to swing back to the English norm and finally to the other end of the arc.

Though writers of the period may have countenanced the lachrymose fidelity of the Colley Cibber heroine, their influence in the development of later romantic emotionalism was slight. It is necessary, however, to examine them in order to complete the

(1) Spectator, no 21, 121

(2) Ibid, no 120.

survey of tendencies prior to the humanitarian movement, to recognize more clearly the signs of transition from an age of head to an age of heart, and to understand completely the wide gesture of humanitarianism to come.

The men we think of as most representative of the spirit of their age were interested primarily in man --- man in society, man and his mind, man and his relations with a rationalistic diety. The primary concerns of Chesterfield, Pope, and Swift were critical, like those of their predecessors; they had inherited their manner and method from the previous generation. Man is a wonderful machine, even as Descartes has said, but born to err, and, as Pope insists, reason must restrain. (1) Chesterfield sometime later, in advising his son, instructs him to study man, (2). The genus homo whom he was to study was an urbane creature whose interests carried him no farther from Charing Cross than the rolled lawns of Twickenham or Richmond. This is a man's world, and the proper study of mankind is man.

In Windsor Forest Pope's recognition of the high place occupied by the human species and the negligible position of the lower is obvious. His conception is typically neo-classic.

The shady empire shall retain no trace
Of war, or blood, but in the sylvan chase;
The trumpet sleep while cheerful horns are blown,
And arms employed on bird and beast alone. (3)

- (1) Essay on Man, II ls 1,2
- (2) Chesterfield, Letter CXXIV
- (3) Windsor Forest, l 371 ff

Such is Pope's conception of the Golden Age to come --- beloved fancy of poets. Certainly in this delectable time, which shall rival the prime of days in felicity, animals shall have no share in the good things of life; the world will continue to be the province of the poet's own kind. In the Essay on Man, however, Pope speaks of the state of nature as having been the time when God reigned here below, when man was neither clothed nor fed by murder; (1) yet later he insists that the present state of things is best and that, though man is tyrant of the whole, he is helping nature and treats animals humanely while he prepares them for his feasts. But in the age of Dryden the position of the lower species had interested the poets not at all, and therefore, this short discussion in Pope is an announcement of a new poetical subject. In addition to their having aided man to make this a better world to live in beasts have been his teachers. From the bee man has learned the art of building; from the ant the science of government.

Like Pope, Gay also considers this a man's sphere. Gentle and kindly as he generally was, he describes with infinite zest the hunt and kill, his enthusiasm mounting as the dog closes in on his victim.

(1) Essay on Man, III, I 154

(2) Gay, Rural Sports, canto II

Eager he presses on, but overshoots the ground:
She turns (the hare), he winds and soon regains the way,
Then tears with gory mouth the screaming prey,
What various sports does rural life afford! (1)

When he writes of domestic animals, however, his tone is distinctly humane. The London coachman is subject for a diatribe in Trivia, because he beats his horse, the friend of man which labors for his comfort. John Gay is generally recognized to have been an early humanitarian; but certainly he was only a mild one who was never willing to sacrifice his own comfort, even philosophically, for the beasts of the field or wood. There are isolated passages like the one in Trivia when he appears as champion for beasts, but there is a preponderance of evidence on the other side. But there is evidence in his poetry of the transition.

Another reason for the lukewarm attitude toward animal life in early eighteenth century literature is that the poets were not familiar with any except the most common domestic animals. The love of the Augustans for the Town is well known, "the dear, damn'd, distracting town" of Pope's Farewell to London. When he describes the rural scene, even such a domesticated landscape as that of Windsor and Eton is generalized, and the animals of the river and forest become "the wanton fawn", "the bounding steed", "the pamper'd goose". When he describes a lark or thrush, there is an obvious lack of first-hand observation.

(1) Gay, Rural Sports, canto II

So when the nightingale to rest removes,
The thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,
But, charmed to silence, listens while she sings,
And all the aerial audience clap their wings. (1)

Surely he was thinking of a West End assembly! Again, he describes the death of the larks, beautifully, it is true, but as if he had received his knowledge vicariously and certainly with no humane purpose.

Oft as the mounting larks their notes prepare,
They fall, and leave their little notes in air. (2)

The song of the poets' bird certainly made little impression on the Twickenham bard. It polished its work as Mr. Pope did his couplets.

And yet there are lovely pictures in his ordered landscapes --- pictures of animals which mark him as a transition poet. In his description he portrays beautifully and faithfully the death of the purple-crested pheasant which mounts on "triumphant wings" only to fall wounded in a crumpled heap when the fowler comes by. (3)

A third reason for the poets' indifference to animals was that, through the influence of Latin models, satiric and didactic poetry was immensely popular among the Augustans. When they used the lower species as subjects, it was generally to point a moral or to belittle man. Dean Swift's Beasts' Confession

(1) Spring, l 13 ff. (2) Windsor Forest l 153.

(3) Windsor Forest, l 115 ff.

illustrates well the tendency. He specified four animals, he says in the advertisement, to symbolize the evil characteristics of mankind, the ass, the wolf, the swine and the ape, "all equally mischievous, except the last, who outdoes them in the article of cunning; so great is the pride of man." And again,

For here he owns that now and then
Beasts may degenerate into men.

Gay often writes in much the same vein. In his vivid praise of rural life (1), he describes the custom of daring larks with mirrors, a method of hunting which has served many a poet with similes. It is pride which "lures the little warbler from the skies," a conception scarcely to be comprehended in any other period except that of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries. In the midst of rhymed epistles on every kind of subject is Bounce to Fop, from a dog at Twickenham to a dog at court. Bounce is a spaniel with a "marly roar". He loathes the anemic and ill-tempered city dog and scorns his tricks of fetch-ing and carrying at the hest of a capricious mistress. The poem has a double meaning, and underneath there is the inevitable satire on the human race; for to Gay the two dogs represent the town-bred man and the honest country gentleman so often satirized in the comedy of manners. (2)

(1)

(2) In Elegy on a Lap-Dog, Gay concludes with the customary thrust at man.

Here Shock, the pride of all his kind, is laid;
Who fawn'd like man, but ne'er like man betray'd

See also Fable no. 9, in which the bull remarks that the dog has learned evil, because he has been trained beneath the butcher, man.

Pope, too, adopts the same method of bitter moralizing in Windsor Forest and delivers with his humanity a sound lecture to predatory man.

(Beasts, urg'd by us, their fellow beasts pursue,
And learn of man each other to undo). (1)

The conspicuous exception to the prevailing literary fashion just described appears in the verse of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, lady in waiting to Mary of Modena before the revolution of 1688, who after the Stuart débâcle retired to her country seat in Kent and devoted herself to writing. She was, in marked contrast to Prior, Pope, and Swift, a close observer of the rural scene. She was not interested in "wild" nature, though she was a sympathetic friend to the animals of her manor park. Occasionally she suggests as none of the classicists does a genuine love of the quiet and orderly beauty of rural England. The Bird in the Arras contains a note well worth contrasting with those of her contemporaries. The bird flies into a room, tries to light on the tapestried foliage, beats in desperation against wall and ceiling, "till some kind hand directs the way" for his escape. In her fables she also shows how thoroughly out of sympathy she is with her age. Even though she uses the form as often as the rest of the Augustans and moralizes energetically, there is a gentleness and a touch of quiet humor like Cowper's. And this quite humor is the only quality which can save a poet of humanity from descending to inanity and bathos.

(1) Windsor Forest, l 123

4.

In this discussion of various centuries which preceded the era of humanitarianism, I have tried to show that the English have normally loved external nature and have recognized that a bond exists between man and the other creatures which share the world with him. Sensibly enough, the love of one's own always comes first --- consciousness of kind, the sociologists call it, as, for example, in Utopia, where More's ideal citizens object to slaughter because it tends to react unfavorably on the human race by making it callous. There are many examples, too, not only from England but from the continent which show that in monasticism there is a humanitarian tendency.

In the seventeenth century there was a deviation from the norm, because man's curiosity was stimulated by exploration and the greater value placed on material comfort and aspirations. Mysticism had vanished. Man consulted the book of nature and inexorably sought to dispel the universal gloom of ignorance with the white light of reason. He hated mystery, preferring sanity to ecstasy and microscopes to stained glass windows. As he indulged his curiosity, he rejected emotional experience because it hampered him in his search for truth. Consequently, he viewed the living things about him not as creatures of feeling but as so many fascinating problems on which he might exercise his intellectual ingenuity and which have been placed here by God for the well-being of the human race. Poets and scientists assumed that their field of endeavor was the same, and they com-

bined forces in their desire to extend the frontiers of knowledge. Such a social temper is not conducive to humanitarianism, which, to flourish, needs responding emotions. What sympathy there was was devoted almost exclusively to man.

But in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, though science and rationalism were still supreme, there are signs of change. True, from the previous generation, the cultivated had inherited an absorbing interest in the affairs of mankind. But since society was urban, its members had little opportunity to observe any except the most common domestic animals. Satire and didacticism were the correctives for human frailties, and the lower animals were used in fables merely for disciplining the human race.

And yet there are signs of a transition. Pope occasionally shows sympathy for the creatures about him, though it is well-controlled compassion. In Gay the tendency is more apparent. Protect the streams from otters, he says, because they kill the fish, and also spoil the fishing. Do not torture a worm by putting him on a hook; besides, a fly makes better bait. (1) Thus speaks the seventeenth century voice. But the coachman has no right to abuse his horse, (2) and man's method of teaching his dog to murder is reprehensible. (3) Though the signs are faint ones in Pope, Gay and Swift, they are unequivocal in Lady Winchilsea; and in Thomson we shall find without mistake that the pendulum has begun to swing

(1) Rural Sports, I 1 253. (2) Trivia, II 1 227 ff

(3) Fable no. 9

away from neo-classic frigidity.

CHAPTER II.

HUMANITARIANISM AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

1. The Christian campaign for converts in the New World. 2. The Restoration conception of the noble savage. 3. Eighteenth century sentimentalists and their belief in the slave's inherent nobility. 4. The brotherhood of man and natural rights.

In tracing the development of humanitarian tendencies in the eighteenth century, we should naturally expect to find that the greater emphasis of writers should be placed upon the necessity of the brotherhood of man, and that before the champions of universal benevolence opened wide their arms to include in their earthly society everything that feels, they should have first devoted their attention to those rights which belong to the human species, including the negroes and Indians of America and Africa. I shall try to show that the first right recognized as common to all men was that of salvation, to which is added, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the more wordly right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Among the champions of man's claims to salvation, both Protestant and Catholic organizations would take the initiative, but there was another group showing faint stirrings of the fraternal spirit in the early eighteenth century which had no concern at first with the Christian movement for the democracy of the hereafter.

Just as the clergy supported their cause by quoting the law of God, this second group quoted the law of nature. The one was interested in man's equality in heaven; the other was interested in man's equality on earth. It was through the contributions of both these groups, who championed man's spiritual and natural rights, that the later humanitarians were able to make some practical gesture towards the realization of their ideals. To prove this contention is the purpose of this section of my discussion.

By 1537 the zeal of various religious orders in Spain had brought pressure to bear on Paul III, who aided them in their work among the American Indians with a papal bull; and first of all, for the more efficient missionary activity of the Roman church, it was necessary for the Holy Father to decree that the Indians of the New World were "truly men and that they are capable not only of understanding but, according to our information, they exceedingly desire to receive it. (Christianity) the said Indian and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty, or the possession of their property, even if they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ." (1) Furthermore, the bull rejects the argument of Spanish colonists that Indians were brutes and states

(1) Sublimis Deus Pauli III, MacNutt, Bartholomew de las Casas, appendix.

that such a contention arose from the avarice of those who would enslave them. These early profiteers were "enemies of the human race", the pope continues, because they tried to exclude fellow men from eternal bliss.

Within forty-five years after the discovery of America, then, the Church had recognized its problem, thanks to Las Casas, himself a Spanish colonist in the New World, who took holy orders, freed his bondmen, and devoted his life to engaging the aid of King Ferdinand and the mighty prelates of Spain in the cause of Indian betterment, for such early friars as he, seeing in America a vast field for missionary zeal, devoted themselves indefatigably to lightening the natives' lot. Seeing that the cruelty of the settlers was playing havoc with these prospective Christians, Las Casas wrote to the king in 1510, recommending that Indian slaves be replaced by African negroes. His motives were essentially religious. First, it was necessary to recognize the Indians as men, not as mere brutes, so that they might be baptized; secondly, since they were of a higher order of intelligence than the negroes, the missionaries could accomplish two laudable acts at one stroke. They could convert the Indians at once and import negroes to occupy the position of bondmen until such time as they, too, might progress to the peerless blessings of Christianity. For two centuries following, both Catholics and Protestants were denying the brutality of the inferior races, though their principal concern was not with terrestrial fetters but with celestial

felicity. And certainly we find Las Casas, like many a later champion of spiritual equality, acting on the Jesuitical assumption that all means are justifiable if only the end be laudable. His whole purpose, like that of the Protestant coadjutors I shall name, was to save man's soul. The body was almost, though certainly not quite, absolutely negligible.

In England the first sentiment against the slave trade sprang from the same religious sources. "The True and Sincere Declaration" of the Virginians in 1609 cleverly anticipated objections by stating that the true purpose of slavery in the colonies was to convert the African. (1) The other method of meeting opposing public opinion was the same that Las Casas and his brethren had used in the bull of Paul III --- negroes and Indians were brutes created like the ox to toil for man.

But it was really nearly a century after John Hawkins first carried negroes in an English bottom to a Spanish colony before any agitation against the trade or the practice of holding slaves was strongly voiced by an Englishman. The majority, in the sixteenth century, looked on the growing traffic indifferently and without abhorrence. Queen Elizabeth had said, when the news of Hawkins's first venture was brought to her, that if the trade

(1) Spear, The American Slave Trade, p 10.

continued, "it would be detestable and would call down the vengeance of heaven upon the undertakers." (1) But later Hawkins was granted permission to add to his arms "a demi-Moor proper bound with a cord", (2) and Elizabeth was the first English sovereign to share in the profits of the trade, a custom which did not succumb to adverse public opinion till the days of Anne.

Not until George Fox went out to Barbadoes to hold meetings there among the Quakers did the horror of the situation come home to a few Englishmen through the agitation of Fox himself and of his friend, William Edmondson. Here were men like the English, but for the color of their skins, growing up in ignorance of Christianity, and he urged their masters in 1671 "to train them up in the fear of God". After he had thus admonished the owners, he urged them to deal humanely with their slaves and eventually to free them. Nothing at all is said of the trade. Above all, the relationship of master and man is like that of Joshua and his household, an excellent opportunity for the patron to enforce service to the Lord. Here indeed were virgin fields for the missionary. (3).

This sermon created a tremendous furore against the Quakers among the planters of Barbadoes. Their meetings were broken up, and members of the society were assaulted until Fox, in behalf of his brethren, restated his position and denied that he

(1) Ibid, p 15 (2) Traill, Social England, v III, Sec. III P 740-1
(3) Journ. of George Fox, v II, P 502.

was stirring up discontent and insurrection among the slaves. The Quakers, he said, merely held meetings with the Blacks, urging them to be righteous before God and faithful to their masters. Fox was willing to compromise, if need be, so far as the slaves' earthly existence was concerned, if the soul might be saved; yet, after he went back to England, he continued the fight. He wrote in 1690 to the "Friends and brethren, ministers, exhorters, and admonishers" to keep up their work among the Whites, Blacks, and Indian kings. (1).

Since the Quakers were a gentle and tolerant people, they did not urge their views vigorously against those outside their society, particularly after the mobs of 1671 in Barbadoes had made it necessary for Fox and Edmonson to state their position unequivocally; but the work inaugurated by these two was carried on, and in 1758 at the yearly meeting in England members were forbidden to concern themselves "in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from that iniquitous practice of dealing in negroes and other slaves." Negroes are men; they should be treated as men. The law of God is invoked in their behalf. And the body becomes of importance as well as the soul. (2)

The Puritans, too, were rallying to the cause, basing their attitude toward the traffic on divine law. Men are brothers

(1) Ibid. (2) Epistles of the Yearly Meetings, v 1 p 307

in God. This is the constant argument, just as a century later was to come in the same cause the contention that they are brothers in nature. Two years after Fox's attack on slave owners in Barbadoes, Richard Baxter stated the Puritan position, going further than Fox, however, since he was speaking from the security of England, in voicing humane sentiments. Slavery is undoubtedly wrong, and the trade is wrong. Man has no right, said Baxter, to treat his fellow man as a beast. He has no right to treat him unkindly, for we are all equal in Christ. Even assuming that slavery is justifiable, there is this Christian brotherhood in which the master is the trustee of God, the guardian of the slave's soul.(1) A planter's chief duty is to care for the salvation of those who serve him; he should think of their spiritual welfare rather than of accruing profits. To keep them from the Word is to endanger their existence in the next world and is "rebellion against God". Thus far, the Puritan point of view is similar to that of Catholic and Quaker.

There are times, however, when slavery is permissible, he thinks, for a man may be enslaved for crime; and even a Christian may sell himself or forfeit his liberty. "But on no condition shall the owner do anything to prevent the salvation of his soul or require him to sin", and those who neglect the bondmen's souls are "fitter to be called incarnate devils than Christians, though they may be no Christians whom they so abuse." (2)

(1) Baxter, Christian Directory, Works, v I, 461 ff

(2) Baxter, v I. p 462.

Little comment seems necessary on this Puritan point of view. All men are part of the Christian community, thinks Baxter, but there is an undercurrent in the Christian Directory, strongly reminiscent of Las Casas. Since we have the institution of slavery, here is an excellent opportunity to do missionary work. He recognizes a right to spiritual freedom, but a man may forfeit his earthly liberty. His position is precisely this: first, care for the soul. Then the question of earthly bondage may be taken up.

After The Christian Directory, the Church of England also advanced to champion the oppressed when Morgan Godwyn, who had spent some years in the West Indian colonies, returned, fired with indignation at the treatment accorded slaves and the carelessness shown by their masters in preparing them for the life to come. Not the least of Godwyn's concerns was the fact that his church had so long remained silent on this question, particularly since the New Englanders and the Quakers were working the missionary field while the Anglicans remained tranquilly aloof. He had waited, he said, for someone to speak, but the clergy had remained silent. In 1680, The Negroes' and Indians' Advocate appeared, and in 1685 he denounced the institution of slavery in Westminster abbey, the very heart of the nation; but, irony of ironies, he dedicated his published sermon to James II, himself a large stockholder in the Royal Adventurers Trading company!

Like the other clergymen, Godwyn was primarily interested

in the souls of inferior races. He had been stirred to activity by Fox's address to the ministers of Barbadoes which had been put into his hands, "a malicious and crafty invective", in which the Quaker had asked "Who made you Ministers of the Gospel to the White People only, and not to the Tawneys and Blacks also?" (with many the like insolent Queries, following in a tedious Harangue." (1) Now this, he declared in virtuous wrath, is manifestly untrue, for does not the Anglican liturgy contain a prayer for all sorts and conditions of men? It was, nevertheless, the scorn of Fox which caused Godwyn to act.

His problem was a little more difficult than the ones faced by the Puritans and Quakers. He had to see that the negroes were insured of eternal bliss without disturbing the earthly status quo. He hated slavery as much as did the dissenters, but he had to go slowly. First, then, he had to answer the ivy-grown argument that slaves are brutes. Then he quotes Virginia law and Lord Chancellor Finch (2) to prove that baptism does not free a negro; but in spite of this appeal to man-made law, he declares again and again the equality of all men before God and their rights to the exercise and privilege of Christianity, and no difficulties or inconveniences whatever can justify the English in denying them salvation. The negroes are human. They laugh and talk. They are entrusted with

(1) Negroes' and Indians' Advocate, p 4 ff

(2) Trade Preferr'd before Religion.

the positions of overseers, an anomalous situation if they are brutes. They reason like men, and their servitude does not imply a loss of humanity.

"Another time it was told me," he writes, speaking of his colonial experiences, "with no small Passion and vehemency, and that by a Religious Person (for so in all things else she appeared); that I might as well baptise a Puppy, as a certain young Negro, the Mother whereof was a Christian, and for ought I know (notwithstanding her Complexion) as dear to God as her self." (1)

But Godwyn believes in humane treatment, though he holds no brief for emancipation of the slave's body. The system is indeed wrong, and with fine scorn he pictures the good Christian at his work of oppression. This part of the problem, however, he is forced to treat lightly, because too many influential people were financially involved by the system.

There never was a more vigorous seventeenth century crusader against an evil than Godwyn, even if his activity was prompted not by pity but by a desire to see his own church get its share of heathen instead of continuing to pray in its inimitably complacent manner for all sorts and conditions of men.

2.

To examine the other tributary to the main stream of humanitarianism in its relation to slavery, it is necessary to pay some attention to early conceptions of the Noble Savage, whom

(1) Negroes' and Indians' Advocate, p 38

we first encounter in the heroic tragedies of Dryden's time and who continues as fictional stock in trade well into the third decade of the eighteenth century. There was naturally much interest in the new lands of Orient and Occident in the seventeenth century, and London shops were constantly stimulating the imagination by displaying as they never had before wares from far off countries. The Noble Savage was the creation of the heroic tragedians and the travel stories of explorers and visiting colonists. He is a child of the imagination. The princes of the new continents were noble chiefly because they were princes, since it was a fundamental precept of these writers that royalty is noble, whether it be the ruling house of Ilium or Timbuctoo. Consequently, we have bronze heroes, ebony kings, and cinnamon-colored potentates roaring out heroic couplets as they lie on the rack or confounding their enemies in critical moments by hurling their vital organs at them.

Dryden's noble savages are typical. In The Indian Emperor (1665) Montezuma is about to suffer death at Spanish hands, but Cortez is willing to show clemency to his victim, because he is a noble prince and because, like the rival lovers in Polyeucte, he would compete with this noble savage only in civilitéé. Like a true neo-classic chieftain, the Aztec speaks:

 Name life no more;
'Tis now a torture worse than all I bore:
I'll not be bribed to suffer life, but die,
In spite of your mistaken clemency.
I was your slave, and I was used like one;
The shame continues when the pain is gone:
But I'm a king while this (his sword) is in my hand.

(1) Again, when Cortez, after having employed an Indian as spy during his Mexican campaign, finds that his creature has betrayed Montezuma, he bursts into disillusioned soliloquy.

Where, banish'd virtue, wilt thou show thy face,
If treachery infects thy Indian race? (2)

This is the histrionic Cortez speaking, we must remember, and not the sprightly gentleman of history.

Dryden's ideas of a state of nature, were they not introduced so casually, would make us think pretty seriously of Jean-Jacques and his pictures of the past in The Discourse on Arts and Science. In the lands beyond the western sea, there are fruitful vales of supernal beauty where guiltless men while away their lives in primitive felicity. (3) And Almanzor, in The Conquest of Granada, cries:

I am as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran. (4)

The Dryden conception of man as a noble savage, wandering happily about in a world, unharassed by care or oppression, is beautiful

(1) Indian Emperor, V 2 (2) Ibid, I 2

(3) To Dr. Charleton: The fruitful vales set round with shady trees,
And guiltless men who danc'd away their time,
Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.

(4) Conquest of Granada, pt I, Act I. Sc. 1

while it lasts, but it is only a poetic convention after all. The poet was too much of a Tory at heart. Though savages may be free, he would not have traded his lot for a less sophisticated one. He was opposed to change of all kinds, as Absolom and Achitophel indubitably shows. (1) It is a beautiful idea for the fancy to play with, and is not to be taken seriously.

In fiction, the Noble Savage was as fanciful a creature as his kindred in heroic tragedy. The classic example is Mrs. Behn's Orinoko (1668), said by some critics to be the first humanitarian novel. But this seems to me an erroneous classification. Mrs. Behn knew nothing of Surinam, the locale of her tale, (2) and a brief outline of Orinoko will be sufficient to show that Mrs Behn's noble savage is but a novelist's conception of princely perfection. Her novel presents the conventional problem of heroic tragedy, the dilemma of love and honor.

Orinoko, an African chieftain of peerless masculine beauty, is in love with Imoinda, an African princess of peerless feminine beauty. He is lured aboard a slaver and taken to America to become a slave. In the meantime, Imoinda, too, because of the jealousy of her lover's grandfather, has been sold and sent to Surinam, where "the noble slave", this "large soul", this "great man", "our black hero" meets her and is permitted to marry her.

(1) We inherit our positions as subjects through the forfeiture of Adam. There is no doubt which idea is a part of Dryden's real Philosophy. Lines 770 ff.

(2) Prof. Ernest Bernbaum has a conclusive article on Mrs. Behn's career as a romancer masquerading as a realist in the Modern Language Association publications, v XXVIII.

After being treated with cruelty, Orinooko leads a revolt against his Christian tormentors, who promise his followers immunity if they capitulate. Deserted, he and Imoinda resolve to die together. He slays her and faces his persecutors. To show his contempt of them, he cuts a piece out of his neck and flings it in their faces. Then with the same heroic indifference he disembowells himself. In spite of this display of "nobility", they take him prisoner, heal his wounds, and prepare him for the torture. He dies nonchalantly smoking a pipe while they hack off his nose, ears, arms, and legs with a dull knife.

On board the slave trader's ship Orinooko's followers have gone on hunger strike, and the worried captain assures their chief that all will be freed when they reach the new land. He would put the hero on parole, were he not suspicious of what would then happen; but Orinooko shames him with a lofty exposition of African ethics.

"Let him (that is, the captain) know, I swear by my Honour; which to violate would not only render me contemptible and despised by all brave and honest Men, and so give myself perpetual pain, but it would be eternally offending and displeasing to all Mankind; harming, betraying, circumventing, and outraging all Men. But Punishments hereafter are suffer'd by one's self; and the World takes no cognizance whether this God has reveng'd 'em or not, 'tis done so secretly, and deferr'd so long; while the Man of no Honour suffers every Moment the Scorn and Contempt of the honestest World, and dies every Day ignominiously in his Fame, which is more valuable than Life." (1)

(1) Works of Aphra Behn, Orinooko, p 164.

Mrs. Behn's hero is speaking the language of his brethren in Dryden, Otway, Southern, and Lee. Again he addresses the slaves whom he has been exhorting to revolt. "Come, my Fellow-Slaves, let us descend, and see if we can meet with more Honesty and Honour in the Next World we shall touch upon." (1) When he makes love, it is in the same grandiloquent manner, for young Indians --- Mrs. Behn does not seem to distinguish between Indians and Africans --- fold their arms, follow the desired one with soulful glances, and sighs are their only language. (2) His action is unmistakably in the heroic manner. Mrs. Behn remarks that in a state of innocence men did not know how to sin, and that "simple nature is the most harmless, inoffensive, and virtuous mistress." (3) But it must be remembered that the slaves desert Orinooko in his time of need; so it is obvious that all are not noble and true in the primitive state, and Orinooko may not be considered as the lofty and primitive soul of Jean-Jacques but a creation after the manner of the author's times. Besides, it has been proved beyond doubt that Mrs. Behn's knowledge of the savage was vicariously obtained.

The Noble Savage and his beautiful innocence remained popular on the English stage and in English fiction for several

(1) Ibid, p 166-7

(2) Ibid, p 131

(3) Ibid, p 131

generations. He became almost as indispensable as the square-jawed capitalist in the modern problem novel or the uncut diamond in the fiction of the Indiana school, and he is presented to us in a variety of thin disguises. In Penelope Aubin's The Noble Slaves we are again presented with a more or less noble savage whose love for his mistress he confesses as he dies. He tells her he was born as free as she is, but religion and his present servitude make the difficulties of courtship insuperable. (1) The author implies that the slave is just as admirable a character as a white man in his natural state.

There is not much in these dithyrambic utterances on the Noble Savage to make him live for us. Mrs. Behn did not know the new world, and neither did Southern, who dramatized the story of Orinooko. Mrs. Aubin's geography is constantly an incomparable joy to the twentieth century reader. Persia and Japan are apparently but a few leagues apart. The hero travels from Quebec to Panama, Mexico, or some such other place --- Mrs Aubin does not seem to know exactly which --- by stage coach, and her Japanese Indians speak Chinese. Now a humanitarian is seldom or never created by the vicarious contemplation of another's woe. Among the religious antagonists to slavery, we do encounter a mild indignation at the

(1) Aubin, Noble Slaves, p 7

lot of the savage, though the soul is of principal concern; but among the writers of fiction and drama the conventional idea of African or Indian nobility was wholly without sympathy, because the author did not know his characters and because he was following a convention. Either there is no emotional attitude on the part of the author or the story lacks verisimilitude, and very often in the heroic tragedy the idea of primitive excellence is introduced too casually to make the reader suspect the author of sincerity.

3.

I have shown how the various Protestant churches and the Catholic contributed their part to the developing sentiment against slavery in the New World by invoking the law of God against it; and how the idea of the Noble Savage arose as a stock figure in the tragedies of the Restoration theatre. My purpose now is to show how this artificial conception of the seventeenth century ceased to be a convention of the far side of the proscenium arch and how it became of use in the practical application of humanitarian philosophy.

But first it is necessary to sketch briefly the background of events which prompted the attacks on slavery by the humanitarians and the apologetics of their opponents.

Before 1729 colonists returning to England on business or for a holiday often brought a few slaves with them. Since it was a generally recognized maxim of English law that a slave when baptized became free, many negroes obtained baptism and successfully

resisted their masters' attempts to force them to return to American bondage. The actual conditions were brought more vividly before the English people when in that year the attorney and solicitor-general handed down the opinion that baptism of a slave in England did not automatically free him. To test the validity of this decision, Granville Sharp took up the cause in 1765. In that year, Jonathan Strong, a slave from Barbadoes, who had been baptized, was seized by his master when about to return to his plantation; but Sharp succeeded in frightening his owner into withdrawing pressure by threatening to prosecute him for assault if he tried to remove the negro. (1)

In 1769 the case of James Somerset came up. The question involved was a larger one than that of emancipation by baptism. The courts were asked to decide whether or not a slave brought on English soil automatically became free. Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his master, from whom he subsequently escaped. The master had the man seized and conveyed aboard a vessel bound for Jamaica. The decision handed down in 1772 was in favor of the enemies of slavery. The result of the trial had far reaching effects. The case was discussed throughout England. Whereas it was libellous in those days to tell the truth in a newspaper about the maltreatment of a negro, such information, if given in open court, might be published with impunity. (2)

(1) Clarkson, History of the African Slave Trade, Chap. I sec II

(2) Spear, The American Slave Trade, p 104

From that time on memoirs and travel stories written by those who knew conditions on the African and American coasts were published almost without number.

Sharp continued his investigations. He found that negro slaves brought to England were cast upon public charity when they no longer were fit for service, and that conditions aboard the slavers touching at home ports were unbelievably bad. So closely were the Africans packed together in the filthy holds of vessels that the mortality among both victims and masters was terrific. Even William Beckford, father of the author of Vathek, himself an owner of slaves in Jamaica, admitted this. (1) In 1787, Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp organized the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which obtained the passage of the first bill for the regulation of the traffic and started the movement which resulted in its final abolition in 1807. The publicity of the investigations made by the committee in English port towns, where they found the space allotted to each captive to be five feet six inches long by sixteen inches broad, extended to the far corners of England. (2) The committee's bill called for a limitation of the number of slaves carried and for their greater

- (1) Beckford, Remarks upon the Situation of Negroes in Jamaica
- (2) Clarkson, History of the African Slave Trade, Chap. 2, sec 1
Bandinel, Slave Trade, p 81

comfort. On the third attempt in Parliament the Dolbens bill passed both houses and became a law in 1788.

In the eighteenth century, however, long before Granville Sharp gained fame as the first abolitionist, there were many humanitarians, among the first and most interesting being Joseph Addison. I have quoted before his satire on the ruthless virtuosi of his times, and certainly if one wants evidence of his kindly feelings toward all living things, one does not have to look far among the Spectator papers or in the work of his friends on The Guardian. In one essay he elaborates the idea that education is the sculptor of the human spirit. To illustrate his point he tells how two slaves with wondrous "greatness of soul" killed their love because neither might possess her alone. What might not this inherent nobility produce if the oppressed races were given an opportunity for cultivation? There certainly can be no excuse at all for the contempt in which we hold the lives of savages, merely inflicting a fine, as we do, on the man who takes their lives and completely depriving them sometimes of their chances for immortality.

(1)

Addison's point of view is significant. The master is to be condemned, and so is society, for carelessness of human life, which should be valued more highly. The master is to be condemned for keeping a soul from salvation. In these assertions Addison is voicing sentiments we have heard before in Godwyn; but the younger

(1) Spectator, no. 215

man, unlike his predecessor, stresses, the importance of the body of man and subordinates salvation, at least so far as his rhetorical emphasis goes. We find, too, that there really is such a thing as "savage greatness of soul". Addison accepts the story as fact, and from the number of times it is quoted by later humanitarians it must generally have been considered authentic. The author certainly believed it. In this essay there seems to be the first evidence of a combination of the religious and literary attitudes toward the savage. He was not a reformer, of course; so he holds no brief for emancipation or abolition. His sympathy is purely intellectual.

This idea of the inherent nobility of even the primitive man appears as a serious thesis in Colonel Jacque (1722). On the Virginia plantation where Jacque found himself a bondman is a master who objects to the brutal treatment of his slaves. He insists that in them, as in every other man, there is good stuff which responds to the right sort of treatment. The negroes were not only to be handled kindly by their overseers but they were to be reasoned with if they did wrong, for their master believed them to be rational. In the discussion the owner, of course, wins his point. "It appeared," said Jacque, "that negroes were to be reasoned into things as well as other people, and it was by this managing their reason that most of the work was done." (1)

To use them unkindly, "is a violence upon nature in every way,

(1) Colonel Jacque, p 174

and is the most disagreeable thing in the world to a generous mind."

(1) Like Addison, Defoe holds no brief for emancipation or the curtailment of the trade. He urges only that the Blacks be treated like free men, for they are noble. They are to be treated humanely, for it is contrary to the law of nature that they be persecuted. Unlike the early clerical writers on the subject, he argues from the law of nature instead of from the law of God, and the emphasis on humanity and the insistence on humane treatment to the body supersedes the early distress over the negroes' welfare in the life to come.

Shortly before and immediately after the middle of the century the presses were issuing sermons and poetry on the institution of slavery at a tremendous rate. Dyer attacked it in The Fleece, though not vigorously, and prophesies revolt and bloodshed if the negroes were not more kindly treated. Grainger made a plea for the humane treatment of Africans, though at the same time in Sugar Cane he seems to want to justify the system. George Whitefield wrote in no uncertain terms to the Methodists of America in A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, in which he assured them they were no better by nature

(1) Colonel Jacque, p 167

than were the negroes. If revolt were to come as a result of the colonists' inhumanity, they would merely be getting what such cruelty merited. Even Shenstone, wandering about the bench-cluttered "landskip" of the Leasowes, speaks pityingly of the negroes' wretched lot, a significant fact, since his life and thoughts were far away from the world as it existed in reality.

Bishop Warburton delivered a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1766, which shows how far the Church of England position had changed since the days of Morgan Godwyn. The purpose of the society was just that which its name implies, to further the Gospel, and consequently he discusses pretty thoroughly the shortcomings of the Anglicans as missionaries. The welfare of the natives, he says, is as nothing to the desire of the colonists to exploit them. Gain is their God. They traffic endlessly in Africans, just as if the negroes were brutes. White men and negroes are brothers, and the slaves have all the faculties of the superior race.

All this is far from new. But he voices the sentiments of the later humanitarians when he invokes both divine law and nature against the traffickers in human lives. White men and black men are "brethren both by nature and grace." (1) In refuting the slave-owners' argument that the negro is happier bond than free, he

(1) Warburton, Works, v 10 p 55

reasserts his thesis that "nature created man free, and Grace invites him to assert his freedom." (1) Godwyn and his contemporaries invoked the law of God; Defoe invoked the law of nature. Warburton invoked both. Humanity and common sense as well as revealed religion are shocked at the godless commercialism of the times.

As one examines the works of those who attack the slave trade during the fifties and sixties of the eighteenth century, he is more and more impressed with the manner in which the movement gained its strength from widely different groups and what strange companions some of these humanitarian champions would have made. Rousseau's famous works were well known in Europe by 1770. America stood on the brink of rebellion. It is as if in the stock rooms of controversy there were innumerable properties available for any crusade in behalf of the oppressed. Among the borrowers appeared John Wesley in 1774, a passionate opponent of slavery, for he had seen it as it was during his American visit; and like his friend, Whitefield, he viewed its effects with horror. Wesley was certainly no follower of Rousseau, even when he maintained that negroes had an inalienable right to their liberty, for he had no sympathy with those English radicals who gathered about Dr. Price. He expended a great deal of his passionate eloquence in apologetics for George III and his government in Observations on Liberty and

(1) Warburton, Works, v 10 p 55

A Calm Address. Political liberty interested him but little. He was willing in the former pamphlet to dawdle with the reductio ad absurdum, like an expert in sophistry.

When it came to concrete rights --- that is, the physical freedom of man to go and come as he would -- Wesley used his voice in the interests of the slave, attacking the whole system with the true fire of the later eighteenth century humanitarians.

Thoughts on Slavery appeared in 1774 when the beauties of liberty were interesting to Europe and were particularly interesting to the western world. He opens his essay with a description of the land of Guinea and a characterization of the gentle savages who cultivate the soil, manufacture a few articles, and live most peaceably among themselves. They are sober, industrious, and noble, except in those sections where they have been corrupted by the white men. "Where shall we find, at this day," he cries, "among the fair-faced natives of Europe, a nation generally proclaiming the justice, mercy, and truth, which are found among these poor Africans." (1) In other words, the English may leave their native land to find genuine virtue among the people they enslave. In reply to the current story that negroes sell their children, he vehemently retorts, "Whites, not Blacks, are without natural affection!" (2) If the negro is stupid, it is because of his master, for he is in no respect inferior to the European (3) and

(1) Wesley, Works, v. 16, (2) Ibid, p 450. (3) Ibid, p 460 p. 448.

in some respects he is superior (1) when he has a European's opportunities.

Like many of those who preceded him, Wesley invokes the natural law, a convenient enough term until it is defined. He uses it, however, in the conventional eighteenth century sense as "the nature of things", the law of things as they are, which man discovers without the aid of revelation, and more to be heeded than the man-made laws which violate the principles of justice. The Angolan has the same natural rights as the Englishmen (2) to personal liberty. In his argument from natural law he passionately arraigns those who would debase their own kind, who have no proper regard for the true majesty of man and his inherent goodness.

In John Wesley, then, we can most easily see how the two earlier conceptions of the negro have been synthesized. Slavery is an odious practice, because it is contrary to the law of God. It is still more odious, because it violates the law of nature which grants every man his physical liberty. The noble savage of Dryden and Behn becomes a genuinely noble savage, not the creature of the imagination. He is as good as the white man when he has the opportunity. Even without them he is more honest and is in no way inferior. Addison would not have gone so far if he had been confronted with the consequences of the point of view taken in the Spectator paper quoted.

(1) Wesley, Works, p 459. (2) Ibid, p 455

The last humanitarian to be discussed here is Thomas Day, a man whose views represent the philosophic ideas before described, with the contribution that Rousseauism would naturally make as soon as the humanitarians realized how aptly the theory of the rights of man could be applied to the situation of the oppressed Africans. Unlike John Wesley, Day was a vigorous supporter of colonial rights. The year the Declaration of Independence was signed he wrote his tract on slavery for an American who had asked him for an opinion on the question; but he withheld the letter from publication until 1784, because he did not wish to make his criticism public before "the happy termination of that disastrous war." Among man's indisputable rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (¶) In kindly fashion but none the less forcibly, Day turns upon the colonists their own Rousseauistic arguments of the Declaration of Independence. While they were fighting for their political integrity, they were holding in bondage men of another color whose rights to the good things of earth were equal with that of the whites. To attack the system as it exists is but to obey the necessitous promptings of morality; for if men are enslaved, the enslavers will degenerate. Natural religion refuses to sanction slavery. Revealed religion deploras it. A man has no more right to be cruel to another than he has the right to kill at pleasure, and to abuse a fellow is a "flagitious insult upon justice, humanity, and common sense." (1) "If there be an object truly ridiculous

(¶) Day, Fragment of an Original Letter, p 13

(1) Ibid, p 28-9

in nature," he continues, "it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves." (1) The only justification for slavery as well as the only justification for government is the consent of all parties concerned.

During the first forty years after the Restoration the humanitarian element in writers on the subject is subordinate. The churches wanted to enlarge their field of missionary endeavor, and therefore their primary interest was to make easier their work in preaching the Gospel. The spirit of competition among the various creeds was strong. Their purpose in converting and civilizing the savage was to add new bulwarks to Christianity and to acquire more stars for their celestial crowns than their competitors of other creeds. Hence, they fought an institution which obstructed their designs. The only literary purpose of such writers as Mrs. Behn was to utilize the new material made available by exploration. The savage appealed to the imagination and was treated in the same terms as the other heroes of the age. He was honorable, because all heroes of the period were ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of fictional rectitude. Later we find Addison and Defoe actually believing in the inherent nobility of the savage, who was therefore not to be mistreated, because his

(1) Day, Fragment of an Original Letter, p 33

illtreatment was a violation of nature's law. He is as good inherently as is the white man. With the introduction of Rousseauism, the theory that all authority is to be based upon the consent of the governed is accepted by those who support their humanitarianism by divine precept and natural law. With the constant reiteration of the idea of the brotherhood of man, it is easily to be seen why Granville Sharp and his friends were able to accomplish a reformation of a system when others had tried vainly. As the groups before described joined forces with those who would extend toleration and brotherly love to the lower species, so the eighteenth century prepared itself in a variety of ways for the idea of a society in which no creature or thing that feels is ineligible if he lives at peace with those about him.

CHAPTER III.

HUMANITARIANISM AND THE LOWER ANIMALS.

1. The changing attitude toward country and the consequent change in attitude toward animals. 2. The philosophic justification of humanitarianism. 3. The status of animals in a man-ruled world as stated by the humanitarians. 4. The application of the new sensibility to British institutions. 5. Widening sympathies with lower as well as higher animals. 6. Increased observation of animals --- the skylark in eighteenth century poetry. 7. Conclusion.

1.

The people of the great English hinterland in the early eighteenth century, bourgeoisie or quality, lived their ordered lives, bartered, hunted, kept the lower clergy in a proper state of subjection, and were eventually buried beneath epitaphs suitable to their temporal state. But so far as the poets who lived in the time of "great Anna" were concerned, this mass of the English nation was unknown or despised. Going to the country for a Londoner meant a bouncing journey over a rough road in a clumsy coach, and he seldom made such a journey of his own accord. Since all life centered in "Town", which meant then as now London and the suburbs, the attitude toward the country was one of undisguised distaste; toward the rural "looby", one of undisguised contempt.

Gay shows what this eighteenth century attitude was when he tells how we, unlike our "pristine sires", do not seek the cool retreat with "sublimest joy" to rest from the noisy clatter of the city. Rather, the city man would betake himself to the Devil tavern, where he might find other companions like himself to help him while away the hours. (1) Pope himself adored the Town and loathed all that country which lay beyond his own estate at Twickenham. There is something artificial and modish about his essay on gardening, in which he professes to scorn "the nicer elegancies of art" and prefers a greater fidelity to unadorned nature. He was following "the Pindaric manner". (2) His heroine, Arabella Blount, after the coronation, returns to the terrible ennui of the country seat, where polite talk did not exist, where guests came seldom, where diversions were few, and where --- peerless woe! --- she dined at noon instead of at four. (3) Mathew Prior, Dean Swift, and humbler Ned Ward add their praise of Town life. In the chorus of Queen Anne singers only obscure Elijah Fenton speaks for a quiet refuge away from disillusionments of the city, (4) and Thomas Parnell sees in the rural scene a place in which to regain health after years spent "softening till high noon in down". (5)

(1) Gay, Wine, L 140 ff

(2) Guardian, no 173. "My compositions in gardening are altogether after the Pindaric manner, and run into the beautiful nature without affecting the nicer elegancies of art."

(3) Epistle to Arabella Blount, vol III, p 226.

(4) Fenton, Epistle to Mr. Southern

(5) Parnell, Health.

The town life of Pope, in which the park represented external nature, was not quickly repudiated by the evangelists of the back to nature movement; and consequently the first gentlemen who became mildly enthusiastic over the rural scene and who forsook London for their estates recast nature nearer to their heart's desire and introduced ideas similar to those which had created the precision of Versailles. Sculptured nymphs and pagan goddesses peeped chastely through English holly; meticulously correct walks gave a glimpse of meticulously correct vistas; Virgilian wildness, with waterfalls, grottoes, and hermitages, gradually became fashionable. But before the century had passed irregularity was popular, and ruins had become the mode. If none was available, the landscape artists constructed a fane with a broken arch to meet the popular demand. Even before 1750 there had been a general exodus from the city by the cultivated, whereby the poetry of nature became less artificial; for even at the Leasowes, where Shenstone was decorating the countryside with summer pavilions and geometric paths, the real nature was so close at hand that even an obtuse observer must perforce have become familiar with it.

After James Thomson published The Seasons (published entire in 1730), the first great nature poem of the new era, the rural scene became fashionable. The poets who followed modified the rules of taste laid down by the School of Pope. Thomson was working with his eye on the object. He did not break entirely

with neo-classic tradition, but he did not slavishly follow any neo-classic model either in form or content. He knew the country he described because he had lived there; so, for that matter, did Shenstone, who created at Leasowes the most famous ferme ornée in England, the model for all ladies and gentlemen who would keep abreast of the fashion. Pope, the leader of the Queen Anne wits, had spent his boyhood at Windsor in an atmosphere far from rural. As the splendor of his school began to fade, the star of the nature-loving school began to brighten. Other poets followed Thomson's lead in describing the country. Some undoubtedly accepted the new mode in the spirit of Shenstone, who went to his estates because he lacked funds, rather than because he loved them, but who helped, nevertheless, to establish the new manner.

Nearly all the poets of nature who followed Thomson were country-bred. That in itself explains why they could reproduce so accurately the rural locale. He himself had been born in Roxburghshire. Dyer came from south Wales. Akenside was reared at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in a district with many border traditions. William Junius Mickel and Allan Ramsay both knew the country in their youth. Somerville was a Warwickshire squire. Henry Brooke was born in Ireland and spent the greater part of his life there. Gray, though born in London, lived in his mature years amid the placid beauties of Cambridgeshire. Cowper, also townbred, spent the most tranquil period of his life at Olney.

(1) Lady Winchilsea, who really belongs to the earlier period, had been a writer of society verse until after James II's débâcle after which she had been forced into retirement. From that time on she wrote poems about nature far superior to similar work by the other writers of her times.

The first reason for the return to nature movement, then, was that the poets of the new era came from the country and knew what they were talking about. They were not trying to make the English landscape a replica of that in the classic bucolics. It was this perfectly natural interest in a familiar locale and the revulsion from a no longer novel form of writing that resulted in an increased observation of country instead of city life. Animals, hitherto mentioned most casually in the poetry of Queen Anne's time, became a fit subject for poetry. Poets whose primary interest is in man will love the town, just as the neo-classicists did. Human nature is their field. They will know it thoroughly. Poets whose primary interest is external world will love the country, just as the followers of Thomson did.

(1) When Cowper was in London, he tried to write satire in the neo-classic manner. But his years in rural England, when he broke away from the imitators of the classics, were as successful and probably far more useful than any other in his pitiful life, despite the Reverend John Newton and his overweening interest in the fires of hell.

All nature is their field. Many other creatures besides man live in meadow and wood. Quite naturally, the new school became sympathetic with an almost entirely new kind of life.

I have already shown how sensitiveness to human suffering had developed after the callousness of the Restoration period. I intend in this section of my essay to study the causes of eighteenth century humanitarian feeling toward animals and to examine the various sources of its philosophic justification. I shall point out how the new philosophic theories and the love of animal life were applied to such secure English institutions as the hunt. Last of all, I want to point out how the sensitiveness to suffering was democratized so as to include almost all sentient creatures and how this love affected English poetry.

2.

Undoubtedly, the English were prepared for a revival of the healthy sympathies and the exultant gusto of late Elizabethan romanticism. The early eighteenth century had been moved by the sufferings of slaves. It had found a pleasurable thrill in the newly-discovered beauty of the country. It was prepared, therefore, to be positively tender to animals. It was prepared, therefore, to observe them more closely. The intellectual and emotional self-restraint of the previous century was becoming

irritating. The Guardian had spoken tenderly of animals and declared that even the fierce ones never attacked unless they were molested. It had gone further and had declared it man's duty to be kind, because the lower species were not entitled to everlasting life and because man had been placed here below as trustee. Even hunting, that thoroughly secure British institution, was wrong, because it tended to make the human race more brutal. (1)

Defoe in the first three decades of the new century was to write his sociological novels. Agitation for reform followed one another, wave after wave, throughout the era. Hence the spirit of the Elizabethans was tempered with new elements, and for that reason the early sentimentalists of the 1700's went as far from the English norm in the direction of humanitarianism as the seventeenth century had gone in the direction of cold-blooded scientific investigation. The movement was justified philosophically to the new century by the deists of the School of Shaftesbury. (2)

(1) Guardian, vol I, no 61, (1713)

(2) Mr. C. A. Moore has explained with a great deal of clarity the influence of Shaftesbury and his philanthropic system in Characteristics. He demonstrates that eighteenth century humanitarianism owes its origin to the great deist. Though it is quite obvious that the earl's doctrine of divine benevolence had an enormous influence on the poets of the century, Mr. Moore has failed to realize that there were other very tangible factors involved in shaping the movement.

He has forgotten that most of the poets of the period knew the country well and loved it in their childhood, that agitation against slavery had paved the way for increased tenderness, and that an accurate observation of and love of the human race and other species may, as in the present case, precede its philosophic justification. Shaftesbury and the Ethical Poets of England, 1700-1760, P.L.M.A. new series, vol 24. Certainly Winchilsea and Gay were expressing their love of a few animals without making any attempt to justify themselves by a system.

Since this was a period in which the thinkers of the period were torn between the conflicting evidence of science and revelation, the followers of Shaftesbury have their choice. They might, like the ostrich, hide themselves from the disturbances of modernity by trusting to the Thirty-Nine Articles, or they might betake themselves to the camp of the materialists, leaving all religious baggage behind. Plainly, there had to be some kind of compromise for those who could not deny recently produced evidence but who still demanded some spiritual balm in a world which was becoming too rationalistic for comfort. One solution was the sentimental system of Lord Shaftesbury, which rejected revelation as the source of knowledge but which saw in the world around ample evidence of divine benevolence and love for everything that lives. God had given to the human species the high gift of reason with which it might solace itself. (1) God is good. Virtue is the chief excellence of man. It alone brings happiness. There are two forces in man --- a desire for selfish betterment and a desire for social welfare. When he yields to the latter, he really is doing that which in the end will redound most fully to his own welfare. (2) The moral sense helps man to distinguish between

(1) The Return to Nature in English Poetry, N. C. Studies in Phil. vol 14, p 260-1.

(2) Characteristics. vol 2, p 163.

right and wrong; and just as God is good, so man, his greatest work, is naturally a creature whose chief desire is to be like Him. Therefore, any desire to commit wrong is unnatural.

"Of this kind (unnatural affections) is that unnatural and inhuman Delight in beholding Torments, and in viewing Distress, Calamity, Blood, Massacre and Destruction, with a peculiar Joy and Pleasure. This has been the reigning Passion of many Tyrants, and barbarous Nations; and belongs, in some degree, to such Tempers as have thrown that Courteousness of Behaviour, which retains in us a just Reverence of Mankind, and prevents the Growth of Harshness and Brutality ... To see the Sufferance of an Enemy with cruel Delight, may proceed from the height of Anger, Revenge, Fear and other extended Self-passions: But to delight in the torture and Pain of other Creatures indifferently, Natives or Foreigners, of our own or of another Species, Kindred or no Kindred, known or unknown, to feed, as it were, on Death, and to be entertain'd with dying Agonies: this has nothing in it accountable in the way of Self-interest or private Good above-mention'd, but is wholly and absolutely unnatural, as it is horrid and miserable." (1)

The conception of God held by Shaftesbury appears often in those writers who best illustrate the changing attitude, in the years that followed, toward all the species. Thomson, first poet of the new century to dwell extensively upon the need of kindness to animals, was also the first to emphasize the goodness of a deity who reveals Himself in the order of "the rolling planets" --- "the God of nature". (2) Though The Castle of Indolence is filled with the same philosophic doctrine, the most unequivocal acknowledgment of divine benevolence appears at the conclusion of Summer (1727). Taught by a tender and loving God, men will prosper greatly; and if they obey their Master, He will teach them

(1) Characteristics, vol 2, p 163.

(2) Hymn to God's Power.

To live like brothers, and, conjunctive all,
Embellish life. (1)

Thomson reiterates Shaftesbury's doctrine that reason aids mankind to proceed from truth to truth. Some mysteries, however, it shall never be permitted to pierce, for those things are forbidden. Suffice it to know that God works only in "boundless Love and perfect Wisdom." (2)

The deistic rhapsody is better illustrated by Henry Brooke's Universal Beauty (1755) than by Thomson's Summer, for not only does he preach the deism of Shaftesbury but he shows how the shackles of neo-classic restraint on the emotions had been cast aside. He rises with ecstatic apostrophes to the great climax when he finally addresses God, "Thou Voluntary Goodness!" (3) Everywhere there are examples of His kindness in this democracy of nature. The world is not made for man alone. If he wishes to learn truths, he should go to the beasts, which heed the divine law, instead of arrogantly setting himself above even God's commands, and butchering carelessly and ceaselessly in a world society where all should live in mutual tolerance.

(1) Summer, L 1776-7

(2) Ibid, I 1804

(3) Brooke, Universal Beauty, book 4 l 85

O! whence to us? or whence to aught? but thee!

The word, the bliss, the privilege to be --

Or if to be, for thee alone to be,

Derivative Great Author Sole!

Another poet who accepts the Shaftesburian doctrine and who applies it to world conditions is Soame Jenyns. He combines Christian theory with sentimental deism by rejecting revelation as the only dependable means of knowledge and by retaining his belief, entirely through revelatory evidence, in the immortality of the soul. Jenyns's Essay on Virtue, plainly an imitation of Pope's Essay on Man, appeared in Dodley's Miscellanies in 1748, and the author also translated The Immortality of the Soul from the Latin of Isaac Hawkins Browne (1759), a poem which had a great vogue. Man only, writes Jenyns, refuses to listen to the eloquent voice of external nature, ignoring the Creator's will and refusing obstinately to see that each animal is here to promote the general good. But the human race, though lord of all, is slave to vice, folly, and pride.

'Tis he that's deaf to this command alone,
Delights in others woe, and courts his own;
Racks and destroys with tort'ring steel and flame,
For lux'ry brutes, and man himself for fame. (1)

The poet was interested only in carrying out his ideas without elaborating extensively upon the conditions resulting from man's ignorance of the great realities, and consequently he is content merely to state his illustration without discussing it at great

(1) An Essay on Virtue, Chalmers, vol. 17

length as did Thomson, who loved animals for their own sake and who probably would have loved them even if he had never heard of Characteristics.

Browne has a good deal more courage than the majority of ethical poets, certainly more than Jenyns. He resolutely tackles the problem of evil, though he leaves it exactly as he found it. Man cannot know, he declares, but he will know when the trump of doom sounds and when God explains all those mysteries in Nature that reason has been unable to pierce. Browne's system of universal love was based on the social institutions he knew. He recognized the brotherhood of man; but his cosmopolitanism was tempered by his patriotism, and unlike the radical of the last years of the century, he places nationality before world fraternity. For Isaac Hawkins Browne, Britannia was still ruling the waves.

..... the patriot's soul
Knows not self-centr'd for itself to roll,
But warms, enlightens, animates the whole;
Its mighty orb embraces first his friends,
His country next, then man, nor here it ends,
But to the meanest animal descends. (1)

These early preachers of the doctrine of benevolence show very clearly how poetic taste was changing. Jenyns with his neo-classic diction and his heroic couplets is distinctly a follower. So is Browne, and Brooke, too, shows little originality.

(1) Immortality of the Soul, Book II, Chalmers, vol 17, p 632.

Yet the mark of the sentimental school is upon them, Since they are all deists, they value rationalism highly, but they value feeling more highly. The same spirit of benevolence which manifests itself in them appears again and again until the end of the century, sometimes accompanying deism and sometimes with all traces of early rationalism lost in a direct appeal to the heart.

The greatest exponent of Shaftesbury's doctrines, unrelieved by any original thought, is Mark Akenside, whose Pleasures of the Imagination (1744-77) is little more than a blank verse rendition of the Characteristics. In the second book "soveran good" is his theme. God has given man a sphere of influence to which he bears the same relation as the deity does to the whole. In this area man is supreme; within its jurisdiction the human heart, filled with radiant love for all, has an infinite capacity for wishing well. Whoever doubts this, says Akenside, surely has never stood by the ocean when a ship lies aground in a dangerous sea and has surely never observed the distress of those ashore as they watch with vicarious agony the struggles of the endangered ones "while holy Pity melts the general eye". (1) Universal brotherhood in the God of

(1) Pleasures of the Imagination, book 2, p 91, Chalmers, vol 14. Crabbe has quite a different picture of the erstwhile humanitarian longshoremen who

Wait on the shore, and, as the waves run high,
On the ~~taxt~~ vessel bend their eager eye,
Which to[^] the coast directs its vent'rous way:

Theirs, or the ocean's, miserable prey. The Village, book 1
Crabbe in his realism faces the actual, which the sentimental deists liked to pass over lightly or to ignore completely.

nature is the dear gift of all our race, regardless of the stings of a capricious Fortune, for there is in sorrow a kind of mob sympathy which brings the human kind together. The prime mover is the altruistic Deity, who bends lovingly over the world and guides it along according to a philosophic system in which the problem of evil seldom bothers. Akenside is not particularly interested in turning over his finely wrought tapestry to see the reverse of this philanthropic design. He knows only that somewhere there is a God, who somehow guides us aright. His is an anemic philosophy which does not look at the facts, lest it find among them something which will mutilate this sickly, sentimental offspring of reason and unreason.

.....The same paternal hand,
From the mute shell-fish gasping on the shore,
To men, to angels, to celestial minds,
Will ever lead the generations on
Through higher scenes of being. (1)

The later writers of the century still retain the idea of God's gentleness, but the rationalizing element in the conception sometimes disappears. Goldsmith's Edwin is a vegetarian, who brings a "guiltless feast" of herbs and fruits from the mountains, and who lives at peace with nature and man, because he preys on nothing. He has been taught by the infinite pity of God to pity those about him. This perhaps is a deistic lesson, though the poem (2) develops no very extended philosophic system. In The Mysteries of Udolpho the theme of benevolence is also

- (1) Pleasures of the Imagination, book 2, p 88, Chalmers 14
(2) The Hermit (1766)

present, but Shaftesbury's system is superseded by an erratic, but still sentimental, pantheism. M. St. Aubert and Emily, who have been pursuing their journey across France with many pauses for tears, but few for lunch, linger in the solitudes and "indulge in sublime reflections, which soften, while they elevate the heart and fill it with the certainty of a present God!" (1) Coleridge's Ancient Mariner (1798) shows no trace of this gentle ineffectiveness, but the plot does turn on the theme of universal benevolence. The mariner has lain for days in stupefaction and watches the living, crawling sea, when suddenly the great change occurs and the spell is broken.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware.

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The albatross fell off and sank
Like lead into the sea. (2)

And in the moral of the tale we are given the famous preachment that he who prays best loves best, because the "dear God who loveth us" made all creatures and loves them. It is the supernatural element here that would preclude any relationship between

- (1) Mysteries of Udolpho, (1744)
(2) Ancient Mariner, l 282 ff

Coleridge and the ethical poets of the Shaftesbury school.

The influence of the benevolent theory, so prevalent throughout the century, is present, whether it be there because of conscious effort on the part of the poet or not. The theme belongs not to the deists only. It permeated almost the whole of eighteenth century literature.

3.

The arguments advanced during the century for increased sensibility in man's relations with animals were proved in a variety of ways, but, as is to be expected, most of the poets and novelists were inclined to prove their theses by an appeal to heart instead of to head. To the majority, man appeared as the benevolent dictator, or, as some of the extremists insisted, as a kind of demi-god with derived powers from the Omnipotent One. The great duty was that man, the stronger, should protect and love the weaker creatures which were not endowed as was the monarch of the earth. None before the advent of Cowper carried humanitarianism to his extremes, who scarcely differentiated between his affections for his pets and those for the human species: or of Blake, whose attitude will be described later.

To Thomson, the greatest influence among the early eighteenth century humanitarians, should go the credit of inaugurating the new poetic movement. Though Lady Winchilsea had observed

the life about her closely, she had confined her attention to the inmates of her mansion park in Kent. Though Gay had been the champion of the abused hackney, his interests were largely urban, and he had little opportunity to broaden his humanitarian ideas. But Thomson's sensibility, like his observation, was more catholic, principally because he knew genuinely wild country in the Scottish home of his boyhood, and because he was able to justify himself philosophically by allying himself with the rhapsodic followers of the Earl of Shaftesbury. During his life he preached vegetarianism, but he did not carry out his theories assiduously; certainly he did not go so far in his advocacy as Ritson or even as Shelley. Thomson came down to London in 1725 with the manuscript of Winter, published the following year, and by 1730 the completed Seasons was in the hands of the booksellers.

In the "glad creation", writes Thomson, man walks superior (1), but too often he becomes a tyrant who mistreats both his own kind and the beasts. Unmindful of divine example, he recklessly persecutes his fellows by imprisoning them in filthy jails (2) and wreaks his savage pleasure on all living things. Since he is the lord of creation, it naturally follows that he should act the part of benevolent guardian to all the earth. The golden age, when men were kindly and friendly, has passed away, because their debased spirit disturbs the ordinary course of nature.

(1) Spring, l 170 ff

(2) Winter, l 359 ff

William Somerville followed closely the philosophic tradition of the sentimental deists and shows unmistakable signs of having written under the influence of the fashion set by Thomson. The Chase (1755) has passages of considerable descriptive power and vigor; and in this poem, written in blank verse, he finds it necessary to explain, after the manner of the newly arising school, the exact relationship between the human race and the lower species. Somerville, despite his deistic leanings, is hard put to explain how man has become a predatory animal --- man who formerly had been lord of the earth and who had ruled in gentleness. He therefore compromises.

.....Devotion pure,
And strong necessity, thus first began
The chase of beasts(1)

The human race was forced to abandon the peace of nature because it did not have enough food and because God demanded animal sacrifices. The first reason given is a rational one; the second must be justified by the revelatory book of Genesis. God has given man the right to hunt other living creatures for food and has made him overlord of the world; but, nevertheless, hunting the "tim'rous hare" is a "vile offense", since he is no match for the whooping riders and baying dogs.

(1) The Chase, Chalmers, vol 11, p 155

There are other points of view, however, of the relation of man and the lower species in which man does not play so dominant a role. Though the poets who were trying to effect a compromise between traditional belief and new thought were sincere preachers of humanitarianism, they fought hard to retain man in their system as the chosen of God. But Vincent Bourne, the lazy dreamer of Westminster school, the teacher of William Cowper,

ignores the philosophic problem entirely and lavishes on animal life a sympathy unjustified by a rationalized system, and he carries his ideas of a democratic universe far beyond the other men of his time. Though he wrote but one thin volume of verse, and that in Latin (1754), his influence must have been profound on Cowper, who translated his poems and carried on his doctrine of sentimental communism. Bourne's work shows an external resemblance to the fables of an earlier generation, as if he had used a classic model which he quickly set aside. Some of his versified stories, such as A Tale, exist only for the moral; but, like Lady Winchilsea, he enlivens his didacticism with a sprightly humor and joyous sympathy.

According to Vinnie Bourne, there must exist between the human race and beasts a spirit of mutual toleration and reciprocity. This idea appears in his pretty little poem, To a Cricket; a fair exchange is no robbery.

Pay me for they warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet;
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give. (1)

And, again, from the very nature of his title for the story of Androcles, Reciprocal Kindness the Primary Law of Nature, Bourne explains his idea of a gentle and tolerant society. Why should the Romans wonder at seeing the erstwhile peevish lion purring ingratiatingly before the considerably agitated Androcles?

All this is natural; nature bade him rend
An enemy, she bids him spare a friend.

When small Lydia is scratched by a kitten (2), the poet explains away the pet's venial sin in a spirit of reciprocal sportsmanship. If one must play with a cat, one should be willing to bear the animal's jests in return.

In 1776 the doctrine of Rousseau begins to manifest itself in those writings which stress the need of a greater kindness to the brute creation. Humphrey Primatt wrote a whole book (#) about the natural rights of the lower animals. There is a duty incumbent upon man to treat kindly the other occupants of the world, which was not made for his happiness only. In fact, beasts have a greater right to happiness in this world than the human race has, because they will not share in the bliss of the hereafter.

(1) This is Cowper's translation and appears in practically all editions of his work.

(2) Familiarity Dangerous.

(#) A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals, London, 1776.

They have no souls. (1) Now there are certain natural rights given to living things, writes Primatt, of which none has the privilege of depriving another. Every living thing is entitled to present happiness. In addition to his right to happiness, man has been given, as gifts, his reason, his immortality, and his dominion over the world. Here below all sentient creatures "subsist together as the joint and temporary tenants of the earth, alike as to passion, sense, and appetite." (2) There is constant argument on the part of the author from an assumption in "the reasonable and equitable claims of brutes". (3) Primatt, of course, is chiefly interested in humanitarianism as applied to animals, but after establishing his thesis to his own satisfaction he applies the same method of reasoning to the problem of negro slavery, as Day did when he wrote to the American planter his Rousseauistic opinions on slavery. Therefore, it is apparent that the favorite topic of conversation and polemic in the Europe of the late eighteenth century, the natural rights of man, eventually was utilized by the extreme humanitarians, who proceeded to discuss the natural rights of sentient creatures.

(1) A Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and the Sin of Cruelty to Brute Animals.

(2) This assertion is particularly interesting if compared with Blake's ideas of a hereafter, in which animal life plays a very important part.

(3) Ibid, p 106

It has been impossible in this paper to discuss chronologically the growth of ideas regarding the relationship of human beings with animals, because the century presents no orderly scheme of development. The conception of a benevolent deity appears again and again long after Rousseauism had given writers a new argument against cruelty. Vincent Bourne is distinctly ahead of his time with his ideas of universal reciprocity. These theories of man's relation with the brutes show, however, that humanitarianism appears in company with many distinctly different groups of ideas. It is not the property, therefore, of any one group of thinkers. It belonged to many poets and prose writers who had little besides their humanitarianism in common. Just as the antipathy to the slave trade did not remain the exclusive property of any religious group, so this antipathy to other forms of cruelty became a pretty general doctrine. Many schools were agreed on the one point of keenly appreciating sensibility --- a word and an emotion which characterize so well the eighteenth century temper. (1)

4.

In the foregoing discussion of humanitarianism as applied

(1) Ritson wrote a treatise on vegetarianism which has not been included in this discussion, because it adds nothing new to the growth of ideas and because his practical influence in the humanitarian movement was not great. His sanity, when he wrote An Essay on Abstinence from Animal Food, has been questioned.

to animals I have shown how the writers, particularly the poets, began to manifest an aversion to cruelty of all kinds and how they sought to justify themselves philosophically. The real test of sincerity, however, is not to be found in glittering generalities. If a writer becomes specific and if in his desire for reform he attacks institutions generally favored by society, then his honesty cannot be doubted.

To the average Briton hunting has been and still is as sacred an institution as the Common Law or the Bill of Rights or hot cross buns on Good Friday, an institution which should be preserved, despite the steady march of events, the increasing denseness of population, and the independence of yeomen who no longer submit tamely to domination by some noisy country squire. The literature of the hunt in all ages has been voluminous, and in the eighteenth century still a favorite subject for poets, who dwelt with pleasure on the smiling landscape, the howling sportsmen, and the whooping hunters. It was a sport for kings and certainly a sport for the red-blooded English, the conquerors of the world. But when The Seasons appeared, it contained a new point of view. The poet described the hunt not as the scarlet-coated horsemen saw it but as the pursued saw it, and with a new conception of justice he scorned the hitherto glorious sport which brought out a pack of hounds, a score of rural aristocrats, and a throng of spectators to see a hare run to cover and finally killed. The poets from

Thomson's first publication to the end of the century treat the hunt in various ways; but most of them condemn certain aspects of the chase, and others are obviously on the defensive, as if they were not quite sure of their ground.

There are two characteristics worthy of notice in the poetry of the hunt; first, the efforts of the apologists to defend British sport; second, the tendency of poets in the opposite camp gradually to extend their sympathies, first to the hare and deer and afterward to all living creatures.

When Thomson describes the rural scene in Autumn, he, of course, devotes some attention to the rural sports of that season. In 1713, thirteen years before the Scottish poet had come to London, Pope had published his Windsor Forest and Gay his Rural Sports; the one with a spirited reproof of the evil men do by teaching beasts to pursue their fellows, the other emphasizing the zest of the chase with a few lines of sympathy for the hare. But Pope, when he says

Beasts, urg'd by men, their fellow beasts pursue,
And learn of men each other to undo,

did not have his eye upon the suffering animal. Like a true neo-classicist he was adorning his poem with a moral; and his real purpose is to point out man's shortcomings, not to attack a system which would appeal so strongly to his splendor-loving heart. Gay too, though his love for country was stronger than that of his age in general, is filled only with a passing pity.

Thomson, however, sounds the new note. In his philosophic system there is no place for such institutions as the hunt. His tender, ease-loving heart revolted at the system of taking lives for tribute in a morning's heedless pleasure. To state flatly at that period that he disapproved of the chase must have taken courage, since he was quite likely to be looked upon as either a crank or a fool. The fact that he spoke out plainly proves him not to have been an entirely sedentary sentimentalist.

Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scar'd from the corn, and now to some loan seat
Retir'd; the rushy fen; the ragged furze
Stretch'd o'er the stony heath (1)

This is a glorious and sportsmanlike performance! he indignantly adds. One small animal, never very brave and absolutely harmless, is run to death without the slightest chance of escape in such an unequal combat.

The pack full-opening various; the shrill horn
Resounded from the hills; the neighing steed,
Wild from the chase; and the loud hunter's shout;
O'er a weak, harmless, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and discordant joy. (2)

The deer, too, finds a defender in Thomson, who speaks again of his stand at bay with the pack, "blood-happy". tearing at his heart.

- (1) Autumn, l 405 ff
(2) Ibid, l 421 ff.

If, however, the Englishmen must give up simple destruction as a means of fighting off rural ennui, Thomson is quite willing that they should continue their sport, but they should pursue only the anti-social members of rural society. There are lions to be chased, which do not cringe before the spears of a "coward band", There are wild boars and wolves which do not fear to fight. Even if there are no wild boars or lions in England, there is still the fox.

.....give, ye Britons, then
Your sportive fury, pitiless to pour
Loose on the nightly robber of the fold. (1)

In Thomson's ideal world, even the dogs and cats have become pacific. The house-dog and the greyhound lie side by side, dozing luxuriously in the manner the poet knows so well how to describe. Instead of dreaming of canine joys such as the pursuit of a rabbit or at least a cat, one attacks the nightly thief, and the other "exults o'er hill and dale" with no particular object, so far as Thomson is concerned, for his exhilaration. (2) And Lizzy, when she says farewell to her cat, remarks upon that tender-hearted creature's abstemiousness from earthly pleasures.

Joy of my youth! that oft has licked my hands
With velvet tongue ne'er stained by mouse's blood. (3)

Like Thomson, Somerville is interested primarily in the higher animals, but he manifests in The Chase (1735), the next

- (1) Ibid, L 470 ff
- (2) Summer, L 232 ff
- (3) Lizzy's, Parting with Her Cat

important hunting poem after Autumn, that an apologist for the sport is necessary. Somerville's poem belongs to that group which marks the revival of interest in blank verse and a demand for almost pure description. That there is evil in the system, Somerville admits; but if man were not permitted to kill --- and God has given him this permission ---, the world would soon be so overcrowded that there would not be room for all. The brute creation is man's property, it is true, but he should devote his whole attention to exterminating only the unsocial animals and to keeping down the population. The hare and the deer are harmless. They should not be molested. Only murderers would enjoy killing such gentle creatures. (1) But, on the whole, he kills those that are harmful and preserves those which are useful. When Somerville talks of useful animals, of course, he means those which make the world more comfortable for man to live in. This poet is no philosopher, and he is forced from time to time to justify his thesis from such incompatible sources as Hebrew revelation and sentimental deism. His significance in this discussion of the hunt lies in his apologetic tone as he follows in the footsteps of Thomson. It never occurred to any of the older poets that an apology was necessary. Brooke, too, has a similar point of view in The Fox Chase. He reviews minutely

(1) The Chase, Chalmers, vol. 11, p 156

the crimes of the fox and then proceeds cheerfully to describe the kill. He explains, however, that the sport is justified because of the fox's crimes against society.

From his Virgilian retreat at the Leasowes comes Shenstone's Rural Elegance in 1750, in praise of country life. It is a descriptive poem in manner much like The Seasons and The Chase, but it goes further than either of them in its attack on hunting. Nature does not "smooth her lawns" for the "rural thane" who goes whooping across country after the by this time well-known timorous hare. Shenstone includes in his sympathies the peasant as well as the defenseless animals. (1)

Ye rural Thanes! that o'er the mossy down
Some panting timorous hare pursue,
Does nature mean your joys to crown?
Say, does she smooth her lawns for you?
For you does Echo bid the rocks reply,
And urged by rude constraint, resound the jovial cry?

See from the neighboring hill, forlorn,
The wretched swain your sport survey;
He finds his faithful fences torn,
He finds his labour'd crops a prey;
He sees his flocks no more in circles feed,
Haply beneath your ravage bleed,
And with no random curses load the deed. (2)

Shenstone makes no provision for hunting even the anti-social animals. His inclusion of "the wretched swain" in his pity is good Whig doctrine, for that party during the century had been attacking the system of game preserves with a good deal of vigor. (3)

(1) Rural Elegance, II (3) England under the Stuarts, p 8, p 472

(2) Rural Elegance

Between 1730, then, and 1750 the humanitarian movement had developed by utilizing various philosophies. The love for external nature had become increasingly apparent in poetry, but the application of theory to practice, so far as the hunt was concerned, did not yet include any but the higher animals. It remained for Blake, Cowper, and Erasmus Darwin to carry eighteenth century sensibility to its highest point.

In the meantime, there is a conspicuous lack of sympathy for cold-blooded animals. Fishes were not included in the game preserves of the sentimentalists. Gay had urged that they be protected and that otters be killed because they spoiled the fishing. Thomson objected to the unsportsmanlike custom of hunting the higher animals, but describes the chase of the mischievous fox with much delight. When it came to fishing, his heart beat tenderly for the worm, but quickened not a beat for the fish on the hook. There seems to be no esoteric explanation for not including fishermen in the numerous attacks on rural sports; yet the reason is not far to seek. Nobody ever seems to get up a very lively affection for a gold fish. They are such impersonal and characterless creatures. That seems to be the only explanation for their exclusion from the rapidly widening sympathies of the sentimental writers.

Thomson's knowledge of fishing is too accurate to be lightly passed over, particularly since his wrath at the hunter had

been so unequivocally stated. When the first freshets begin to ebb, he writes, get out the rod, line, and fly, and "issuing cheerful, to thy sports prepare". The poet knows exactly where to cast and where the trout will be waiting.

Then fix, with gentle twitch, the barbed hook;
Some lightly tossing to the grassy bank,
And to the shelving shore slow dragging some,
With various hand proportioned to their force ... (1)

The young fishes may be thrown back with fitting compassion for the "speckled infant". But if a real game trout seizes the fly, then the sportsman must play him with the utmost skill.

.....At once he darts along,
Deep-struck, and runs out all the lengthened line;
Then seeks the farthest ooze, the shelt'ring weed,
The covered bank, his old secure abode;
And flies aloft, and flounces round the pool,
Indignant of the guile(2)

William Junius Mickle's poem, The Concubine (1767), is the only one I have discovered in all the poetry of the century which treats the fish with any sympathy at all, and he introduces it incidentally. He is comparing his knight to a fish, and his description is similar to that of Pope in Windsor Forest, where Pope speaks of the dying pheasant. The very fact that he introduces the trout in a simile and disposes of it in six lines emphasizes its unimportance. (3)

Toward the end of the century, however, the fish, too, was accepted into the great kinship by Mrs. Radcliffe's character,

(1) Spring, L 413, ff

(2) Ibid, L 436 ff

(3) Poems and a Tragedy, William Junius Mickle, Sir Martyn

M. St. Aubert, who, after his wife's death had prostrated him, began to recover slowly and visited first in his convalescence his favorite fishing-house. But it really was not a fishing-house. "A basket of provisions was sent thither, with books and Emily's lute; for fishing tackle he had no use, for he never could find amusement in torturing or destroying." (1)

5.

Though the attack on the institution of hunting was the first and almost the only example of a practical application of humanitarianism in the century, so far as animals were concerned, the democratising tendency was manifest. Sympathies were widening. Cibber and Steele championed the oppressed but faithful wife. Addison championed the abused dog which went beneath the vivisectionist's knife. Gay championed the horse. Then Thomson widened the field of sensibility and championed the hare, the deer, cattle, birds, and even the worm.

When he describes the merry sport of casting for trout, he warns against the use of the "tortur'd worm", which twists convulsively but uncomplainingly on the hook. Birds are to be treated tenderly. They should neither be killed nor put in cages,

(1) Mysteries of Udolpho, p 8

and he describes with characteristic pity how the female returns to her nest to find it robbed by "the hard hand of unrelenting clowns". Thomson was probably more fond of birds than of any other animal, for they appear in The Seasons with great frequency. He appreciates the finesse of the "aerial courtship" as if he had watched it closely. He likes to dwell upon the fledgling's first attempt at flying. He enjoys the annual visit in winter-time of the redbreast which pays its annual visit to man and is rewarded with food. He is filled with love for the cattle which return from the snow-covered fields.

"And ask, with meaning low, their wonted stalls."

He urges the shepherds to be gentle and kind to their charges. Thomson's humanitarianism, however, lacks the leaven of sound sense and humor, without which sensibility generally becomes the most fulsome bathos. Though Cowper carries his love of the species much further than any poet before him, he is saved from a sicklied sentiment by the very fact that, instead of treating all living creatures in groups, he appreciates their individuality and forgets at times that his poetical profession is to be kind. His sentimentalism is not self-conscious.

This point of view held by Cowper is similar to that of Vincent Bourne, whom he knew at Westminster school. Bourne's sympathies were limited, because he spent most of his life in

London, and so the animals that came beneath his notice are the ones to be found in a metropolitan area. His birds have an individuality of their own. He does not treat them collectively, and he includes in his society even the glow-worm.

Perhaps indulgent Nature meant,
By such a lamp bestow'd
To bid the traveller as he went
Be careful where he trod;
Nor crush a worm, whose useful light
Might serve, however small,
To show a stumbling-stone by night,
And save him from a fall. (1)

The jackdaw, the cricket and the parrot have almost as much character as Chanticleer and Pertelote, or the eagle which carried Chaucer to the house of fame. The difference between Bourne's fables and those which became popular after the L'Estrange translations is that Bourne's animals are no longer men in beastly shape. The Bourne fables are often moral in purpose, but he never sacrifices his story because of his didacticism. His tribute to the housefly shows clearly the fraternal spirit in which he viewed the life about him.

Busy, curious, thirsty fly,
Drink with me, and drink as I;
Freely welcome to my cup,
Couldst thou sip and sip it up,
Make the most of life you may,
Life is short and wears away.

Lawrence Sterne's Uncle Toby expresses the same sentiment twenty-six years later.

(1) The Glow-Worm, Cowper's translation.

Shenstone's democracy was not quite so catholic as Bourne's, for he could never feel the proper fraternal glow for the moths which got into his wardrobe and devoured his clothing (1); but he was moved to rhythmic eloquence over the hare, the blackbird, and the various domestic animals which appear so often in the poetry of the period. Like Thomson, he objected, in a time when universal love was becoming fashionable, to the robber of bird's nests. He advises his friend, Jago, in 1747, to keep a bird or two about the house as pets. (2)

In The Fleece (1757) John Dyer includes the customary councils to the rural swains and advises them to be gentle with their "blameless fellow creatures", particularly with sheep, since they are the subjects of his work, and he tells them to

(1) Progress of Taste.

(2) He writes to Jago in 1739 "a letter in the manner of Pamela", an imitation rather than a parody, telling him how his housekeeper, Mrs. Arnold, came in to tell him of some newly-hatched chicks and inviting him out to see them. "'Poor pretty cretars! says she! look here, Master, this has got a speck of black upon her tail.' -- 'Ay, I thought you weren't without one about you, says I -- I don't think, says I, Mrs Arnold, but your soul was designed for a hen originally. 'Why, and if I had been a hen, says she, I believe I should have done as much for my chicks as yonder great black-and-white hen does, tho' I say't that should not say't, said she.'" vol 3, p 5. Though written jokingly nothing could more adequately express Shenstone's own sentimentalism.

be like "Brahma's healthy sons", whose hands are innocent of slaughter and who subsist happily on fruit and herbs. (1) The man who kills them for food is a glutton. And

..... Ev'n to the reptile every cruel deed
Is high impiety. (2)

By 1760, then, humanitarian thought had broadened sufficiently to include practically all living things in a world where man's supremacy was not doubted. He was morally obliged to be a genial overlord on earth, the champion of the helpless instead of the leader in persecution. Before Cowper and Blake the general attitude toward animals was one of pity. With them, pity is transformed into fraternal sympathy. As succeeding sentimentalists joined the chorus of protest against the slave trade, they began to be more sensitive of the woes in other species. The practical reformers who attacked the slave trade profited at once by the humanitarian agitation which had become more extensive. But there

(1) It is generally believed that eastern influence is responsible for the origin of eighteenth century humanitarianism toward animals. There are, however, but few references to eastern humanitarianism and vegetarianism, and they are generally incidental like this one in Dyer. Ritson, of course, uses the Brahmans as an example when he makes his attack on animal food; but his erudition was infinitely greater than that of the mass of writers, and he calls up examples from a variety of places to prove his point.

(2) Fleece, book 2, vol 9. p 563.

were no practical reformers in the eighteenth century to make the burden of the lower animals lighter. The latter movement was purely literary. But the literary influences were not insignificant. The widening sympathies of the time encouraged a closer observation of animal life, and this change in attitude brought forth some of the finest lyric poetry that the English had produced since the Renaissance. Had there been no interest in nature, had there been no reaction against intellectualism, had there been no increasing appreciation of human affections and emotions, we might have been spared some of the treacly gabble of a Shenstone, but we might also have lost some of the peerless beauties of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats.

6.

To show how enormous was the progress in observation of animal life no more typical group of poems can be selected than those which treat of the skylark. I have already remarked how Thomson expurgated even the dreams of his dogs, and yet how keenly appreciative he was of them as a species and how well he knew their habits. Cats received some attention from eighteenth century poets. Domestic fowls of all sorts were described with care. Even insects found a place in poetry, for the first time in English literary history, according to Lafcadio Hearn. Before that time little had been said of them, because the coldness

of the British climate prevented the poets from being very familiar with them and because the mediaeval church looked upon them as mysterious and sinister. (1)

Though the skylark had been a favorite among English poets even in the neo-classical period, it was used largely for the purposes of simile, and there had been practically no admiration and certainly no keen observation of the bird. (2)

"English poetry about birds," writes Lafcadio Hearn, "represents a very large proportion of lyrical expression of the very highest order. It is emotional or meditative poetry of the most complex kind at its best. Perhaps there is no other subject which poets have treated in a higher and more complex way." (3) But it is obvious after examining the treatment of the bird in Pope's time that even the "feather'd tribe" had become sophisticated; for the skylark of Windsor Forest prepared her little notes

(1) Lafcadio Hearn, p 265-9

(2) Reynolds, Treatment of Nature in English Poetry, p 27. The lark has its own established set of applications. Dryden, Waller, and Savage represent the poet as a lark singing when the sun shines, and Waller suits the figure to the times by making the Queen the Sun. Tickel called himself an artless lark. Somerville is a morning lark. Wycherly compares both Virgil and Pope to larks. Any fair one has a voice like a lark, and to Dyer's delighted ear the maidens who spun English yarn sang like a whole choir of larks. Not infrequently comparisons are drawn from the old custom of daring larks by mirrors or objects that would excite terror.

(3) Hearn, Interpretations of Literature, vol 2, p 319

quite like a pseudo-classic poet and appeared to have a carefully studied technique. Gay's skylark is a most humanly gullible creature.

Pride lures the little warbler from the skies;
The light-enamour'd bird deluded dies. (1)

In Shenstone the lark is still far from ingenuous; he is a conscious artist and is invited to display his vocal powers under Daphne's window.

Go, tuneful Bird, that glad'st the skies,
To Daphne's window speed they way;
And there on quivering pinions rise,
And there they vocal art display. (2)

The next poet of importance to observe the skylark is Joseph Warton; he speaks of the shrill lark that wakes the woodman to his early task. (3) It is Gray, however, who marks conspicuously the changing attitude toward the poets' bird, when that valetudinarian Cambridge don anticipated the greatest of skylark poems to come with Shelley.

But still the skylark warbles high
His trembling, thrilling ecstasy,
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light. (4)

- (1) Gay, Rural Sports, canto II, l 560
- (2) Shenstone, The Skylark
- (3) J. Warton, The Enthusiast.
- (4) Gray, Pleasures of Viscissitude.

Gray's poem was written 1754-5, but was not published until 1775, seventeen years after Joseph Warton's verse. Gray's bird, it is scarcely necessary to remark, sings with pure joy as it soars skyward; so it is very obvious from his closer observation that Gray must have found pleasure as he listened to the invisible singer and must have found his pleasure the keener because of the mystery. Thomas Warton next voices his appreciation (1777).

Fraught with a transient, frozen shower,
If a cloud should haply lower,
Sailing o'er the landscape dark,
Mute on a sudden is the lark;
But when gleams the sun again
O'er the pearl-besprinkled plain,
And from behind his wat'ry veil
Looks through the thin descending hail;
Salutes the blithe return of light,
She mounts, and lessening to the sight,
And high her tuneful track pursues
Mid the dim rainbow's scattered hues. (1)

The Oxford antiquarian gives new information about the bird, for he has added a new and lovely habit of the singer which stops its song when the sun goes behind a cloud, a true poetic conception, and like Gay, he speaks of it "lessening to the sight". William Whitehead also pays his devoirs and adds another pretty idea when he speaks of the bird's silence when it reaches the apogee of its flight.

See how the Lark, the bird of day,
Springs from the earth, and wings her way!
To heaven's high vault her course she bends,
And sweetly sings as she ascends.
But when, contented with her height,
She shuts her wings and checks her flight,
No more she chants the melting strain,
But sinks in silence to the plain. (2)

(1) T. Warton, Ode K

(2) Whitehead, Skylark.

Cowper speaks of the lark and is impressed with the gayety of the innocent. (1) In all the passages mentioned the poets conspicuously fail to draw morals from the lark's song, a point which was not lost upon such didactic poets as Gay, who never failed to draw a lesson or a similitude whenever the bird was mentioned. Much poetic lore is utilized by Shelley; his predecessors were preparing the way for his crowning achievement in poetry about birds. And he adds a great deal of his own. Pope's lark prepares its song. Shelley's sings with "profuse strains of unpremeditated art". He speaks, too, of "the soaring bird", "the ecstatic song", the "unseen singer" --- all the fine phrases which have preceded him are combined to create the most magnificent bird poem in the English language, a perfect tribute to the poet's rival.

7.

The progress of the poets and prose writers, then, in the eighteenth century was away from the neo-classic tradition of intellectualism, though many, like the followers of the School of Shaftesbury, carefully rationalized their positions. They sought a reasonable as well as an emotional justification for

(1) Cowper, Task, I, p 285

their points of view. The poets, particularly, sought inspiration in the country instead of in the town, because most of them knew the country and because they were tired of the neo-classic adaptation of worn-out themes. Their knowledge of the rural scene and of animal life had been therefore obtained at first-hand, whereas the poets before Thomson, with few exceptions, had been content to study nature vicariously through the medium of the Latin pastoral. The sensitiveness during the century to human suffering prepared the way for a sensitiveness to all suffering. Nearly all the poets mentioned in this chapter, Thomson, Shenstone, and Dyer, who deplore cruelty to animals, also criticise the conditions in jails, the oppression of the peasant, or the evils of the slave trade. During the first two decades of the century the sentimentalists established a system of ethics which conceived of God as benevolent and of human nature as essentially good. Many poets took from the deism of Shaftesbury the philosophical justification of a position they were already prepared to take, though the doctrine of humanitarianism is preached by many poets who show no evidence of Shaftesbury's influence. Benevolence and sensibility had places in all branches of sentimental activity and thought. Neither Dyer nor Shenstone is a sentimental deist. Primatt obtains his system from Rousseau. Rousseau talks only of the rights of man; Primatt talks of the natural rights of beasts.

As sympathies widened to include all things, there was a tendency to democratize all nature, and the literary men showed first pity for the higher animals and then for all living creatures. But the fraternal spirit was not yet strongly felt. The writers before Cowper were compassionate; they were not sympathetic. The chief contribution made by them to their times is their accuracy in observing animal life and the high quality of lyric poetry they helped to develop.

It has not always been possible to examine their work chronologically, because the development of literature about animals was erratic and does not lend itself to any systematic treatment. The humanitarian emotions were appearing here and there, now unequivocally, now by implication, in a variety of philosophic systems, just as did the agitation against the slave traffic which confined itself to no one creed or school of thought. This fact will be more apparent after a study of such poets as Cowper, Blake, and Darwin, in whom literary catholicity of feeling reached its height.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CULMINATION OF HUMANITARIAN FEELING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

1. Cowper and the spiritual kinship. 2. Blake and the ideal kinship. 3. Darwin and the scientific kinship.

1.

I have shown in the foregoing chapters how the humanitarianism of the eighteenth century became more popular; how it formed alliances without number; how it tended gradually to extend the confines of democracy and to concede to the inferior animals a more dignified place in the scheme of things. In the literature before the Restoration a fondness for lower forms of life is apparent, but it never became such a persistent force as in the eighteenth century, never made before such a conscious demand for tolerance. In the concluding chapter of this essay, I shall make brief studies of three later humanitarians to show to what extremes the champions went and to show in what diversified systems Cowper, Blake, and Darwin carried on the movement which had gradually developed during the century. Cowper in many respects carried on the doctrines which have been stated before. Darwin in his method is prophetic of the coming age of science.

Temperamentally, Cowper was never fitted to accept the relentless and self-effacing logic of Calvinism. Had he lived farther away from the noise of conflict, had he never met the Reverend John Newton, he might have been far happier and might have found in the common sense of St. Paul the spiritual balm to cure his stricken soul. He was a gentle, amiable, sensitive person to whom the terrible God of the Genevans simply would not remain terrible. God is all-good and all-wise and all-powerful, Calvin assumed. He works out destinies in His own way, and it is not for the individual to worry about his own salvation or his own place in the mighty scheme. To God, pre-determined damnation or election are but parts in the divine program. Nothing could be more logical than this if one accepts the general assumption that a frowning deity sits somewhere in space with a book of rules in one hand and a syllogism in the other.

Cowper's Olney Hymns and some of his other poetry show precisely how this agonizing religion had gripped a gentle soul who never intentionally harmed anyone in the world, but whose spirit suffered the most damnable torments. And yet, through the black midnight of Calvinism, there breaks occasionally the Pauline sunlight. God is love. So does Cowper insist again and again until he finds himself once more in the gloom of a philosophical system which he did not have the temperament tranquilly to dispel or utterly to reject.

In his youth he had gone to Westminster school, where he received a sound classical training under Vincent Bourne, whose Latin verses about animals have been mentioned in the foregoing chapter. In his later years he acknowledged his debt to Bourne with interest, for he said his instructor had taught him indolence as well as Latin; but Bourne must also have encouraged in him the development of the delicate humor which remains to this day his greatest charm.

After his first attack of insanity, which came while he was seeking a political sinecure through the aid of wealthy relatives, he went to the village of Huntingdon, a soporific market town of two thousand, and there he met the Unwins. His religious delusions developed after he went mad, not before, when worry over examination for the political appointment had aggravated his morbidity. When living with the Unwins, his days were passed in going to church, praying, and singing hymns.

When the Reverend Mr. Unwin died in 1767 as a result of an accident, Cowper continued to live with his widow. The Reverend John Newton, having heard of the religious zeal of Mrs. Unwin, sought an introduction to her and finally procured for them a residence in Olney, Buckinghamshire, where he held a curacy. Here

Cowper had a second attack of madness with an accompanying desire to kill himself. Newton was his faithful friend, but the Calvinistic element in his piety must have contributed new and exquisite forms of mental torture. It was after the departure of Newton for his new charge of St. Mary Woolnoth that Mrs. Unwin persuaded Cowper to make some sustained literary effort. In 1780-1 he produced Truth, Table-Talk, and The Progress of Error. He became interested in animals and gardening --- two occupations which kept his mind off the puzzling problems of his spiritual destiny. After Newton, the greatest influences in his life were women. After the separation from Newton and under the kindly protection of Mary Unwin, Lady Hesketh, and Lady Austin, his life was as tranquil as such a person's may be. He lived a quiet and sedentary existence, in a score of years never going more than ten miles from home, but living intensively, nevertheless, the life of his village and taking a lively interest in the affairs of its people.

In the country, where he was surrounded by the little group that loved him, Cowper worked out his life. He had an abundance of leisure, which sometimes bored him, and plenty of time in which to develop his idealism with Wesleyan eloquence if not with Wesleyan militance. Yet he was not able completely to escape the harsher aspects of Calvinism as Wesley did when he

rejected logic and declared that works and faith precede election, thus completely reversing the Genevan doctrine.

But Cowper in the main worshipped a God who "moves in a mysterious way" and who fills the recalcitrant with such utter and stupefying terror that he shrieks,

Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains hide,
Or bury me in ocean's angry tide!
The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes
I dare not(1)

For the sinner the Bible is a rule of life and worship. He need not incur the penalty of his own depravity if he accepts the inspired word.

The book shall teach you; read, believe, and live. (2)

Upon the throne sits triumphant Grace, reigning alone and scorn-
ing any rival as a means to eternal bliss. The mere fact that
one has lived an exemplary life will not save. (3) Works,
however, are to be esteemed, because they are man's highest
pleasures; yet he cannot take comfort or solace in them, for
God alone, as Calvin had said before, puts charity in the hearts
of the blessed. (4) Even the harlot, in her humility, may
somehow be bathed in regenerating light while the proud are re-
jected by this terrifying deity. (5)

Certainly with a conception of the divine like this,

(1) Truth, l 269 ff

(2) Ibid, l 274

(3) Not of Works, Hymn LXIV

(4) Charity, l 7

(5) Progress of Error, l 511

Cowper would have rejected and did reject the sentimental God of the deists, who exposes His secrets through the reason and who leaves the sole evidence of His handiwork in mountain and flood. If man is not perversely blind, then God will show him the way, and

Nature, employed in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace. (1)

Thus far, the deistic position is tenable; but Nature is the handmaid and may by no means be accepted as the truth which sets us free, as the deist would have us believe.

Yet through the clouds of doubt there comes the vision of a time when all will be different, when the sternness of God's face shall relax, when the Golden Age shall return to a world long cursed because of original sin. At the sound of the last trump, God will come,

Propitious in his chariot paved with love. (2)

The real God of Cowper, if we may take him without the influence of religious terror, is a God of love and benevolence, who held

(1) Hope, l 145

(2) Task, VI L 744

the world as dear as the poet held all living things. Time and again his optimism struggles with that relentless logic. Man has an "elective voice" and may choose between good and evil, but despair throws him back again on the horns of the dilemma. How can a man be free and at the same time be predestined before his birth? There was no answer, and Cowper found none which satisfied him for more than a moment. (1)

There are joys to be had in life, however, notwithstanding that destiny is so uncertain and the chances of election to eternal bliss a matter of such heartbreaking doubt. He carefully discriminates between valid pleasures and invalid. Card-playing is wicked, hunting is wicked, intemperance is wicked, the tavern is wicked, desecrating the Sabbath is wicked. The highest good is altruism; the highest pleasure, the brotherhood of man.

No pleasure! Are domestic comforts dead?
Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled?
Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame,
Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?
All these belong to virtue, and all prove
That virtue has a title to your love.
Have you no touch of pity that the poor
Stand starved at your inhospitable door?
Or if yourself, too scantily supplied,
Need help, let honest industry provide,
Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart.
These both are pleasures to the feeling heart. (2)

- (1) Progress of Error, L 45
(2) Ibid, L 243 ff

And Cowper practised what he preached. Wherever he lived he was loved. Man in the abstract he despised. Man in the flesh he helped in a practical way when he could, and was during his whole life the champion of liberty and the rights of men to share in the world from which Christian communism had temporarily been banished. When he moved to Olney, he became the eager assistant of John Newton in his pastoral duties, aiding his parishioners with gifts against their immediate needs and with his eloquence trying to influence public-spirited men to ameliorate social conditions in the village. Lace-making was the principal occupation of the poor in Olney, and Cowper was the friend of them all. To Joseph Hill he wrote of his charitable activities; how he had taken blankets to the homes of the poor and how delighted they had been, one old woman being unable to sleep the first night because of the unwanted luxury. (1) In the same letter he protested against the hardship of a tax on candles which made illumination prohibitive in neighboring cottages. The villagers called the poet "the squire" and "Sir Cowper"; and a parliamentary candidate recognized his powers among the voters by seeking his political support, much to Cowper's surprise and amusement.(2)

He was a passionate sympathizer with the cause of the oppressed everywhere, though his practical activity was confined

(1) Letter to Joseph Hill 3 July '84. (2) Ibid 29 Mar '84

to the little group in which he lived. He watched with ecstasy the growth of liberal feeling throughout Europe and looked forward delightedly to the forced abdication of princes who thwarted the public will. He recognized the menace of the Bastille to liberty, but his hopes for the future were that some form of constitutional democracy like England's would be as far as the revolt should go. "What is man?" (1) he asks, and then proceeds to tell how his noblest acts are nothing in the Master's sight. But to the question, "What are men?" the events of his life answer far differently. Men belong to a brotherhood transcending the narrow confines of nationality.

I think, articulate, I laugh and weep,
And exercise all functions of a man.
How then should I and any man that lives
Be strangers to each other? ----- (2)

And in his eagerness for fraternity with the patriots of France he sets the loss of the American colonies at naught.

True, we have lost an empire -- let it pass. (3)

All that counts is manhood, virtue, and truth.

To such a temperament as Cowper's, slavery was absolutely insufferable; and though he took no active part in the battle waged by Granville Sharp, his heart was in the cause. The only difference between white and black lies in the color of their skins. (*) "Slavery," he wrote to the Reverend Walter Bagot,

(1) Truth, I 382 (2) Task, III 1 200 ff
 (3) Ibid, II 1 263. (*) Negro's Complaint.

"and especially negro slavery, because the cruelest, is an odious and disgusting subject. Twice or thrice I have been assailed to write a poem on that theme.... There are some scenes of horror on which my imagination can dwell, not without some complacence. But then they are such scenes as God, not man, produces. But when man is active to disturb, there is such meanness in the design, and such cruelty in the execution, that I both hate and despise the whole operation, and feel it a degradation of poetry to employ her in the description of it." (1)

The poet's love for animals was as sincere as his love for men; he loathed hunting in all forms and was even willing to let the suspect go in peace so long as self-defense permitted the general armistice to last. Unlike those earlier poets who exulted over the chase or who wrote apologetically of the great English sport, he includes in his world society all living creatures. "Man may dismiss compassion from his heart, but God will never."

I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm,
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarn'd,
Will tread aside and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,

(1) To Rev. Walter Bagot, 1788, Southey ed. vol 6.

And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die;
A necessary act incurs no blame. (1)

In the first days before "sin marred all", man ruled as God's viceroy on earth; but now his erstwhile subjects have rightfully revolted, and mutual mistrust is the appalling result. (2) Far off in the future there will come again a peace of nature when all animals will once more live together in perfect harmony and contentment, when every infant may with impunity "dally with the crested worm". (3)

For vegetarianism Cowper sensibly had no use. He had no quarrel with the eater of flesh in a world where every animal must prey on some living thing in order to exist. Over all, God gave to man the right of life and death, but killing for the mere joy of killing was as alien to Cowper as it was to the fastidious and highly civilized Utopians of Sir Thomas More.

(4) The true lesson to be learned is that God loves us, but that the world is not created for men only. Other creatures on earth besides men have an interest in the Father's love.

The Cowper rabbits will live in literature with less fame than Horace Walpole's cat, which was drowned in a gold-fishing expedition, but with more, perhaps, than Dr. Johnson's

(1) Task, I L 560
(2) Ibid, I L 368

(3) Ibid, I L 773
(4) Ibid, VI.L 450

feline gutter friend, one Hodge, which Boswell abominated almost as much as he did the doctor's other pensioners. There is one story of Cowper which illustrates well what a place of consideration Puss occupied in the Olney ^{min}nage. He was in the parlor one day when Mr. Grenville, who sought to represent the Olney constituency in Parliament, called on the poet. The poor gentleman was announced, but was forced to enter by the back door, because Puss was not to be given a nervous shock by the sight of a stranger. As soon as he was safely in his hutch, the politician was permitted to enter. (1)

To Cowper every creature had an individuality as distinct from others of the species as men are distinct, and he found the subject interesting enough to write an article about. "You observe, sir," he wrote to the Gentlemen's Magazine, "that I describe these animals as having each a character of his own. Such they were in fact, and their faces were so expressive of that character, that, when I looked only on the face of either, I immediately knew which it was... I doubt not that the same discrimination in the cast of countenances would be discoverable in hares, and am persuaded that among a thousand

(1) Letter to Joseph Hill, 3 July '84.

of them no two could be found exactly similar; a circumstance little suspected by those who have not had an opportunity to observe it." (1)

In Cowper's view, then, the world was originally intended by God as a democracy in which all creatures that live, from men to fireflies, had a natural share with man as ben-evolent viceroy having delegated powers from the Almighty; but because of the original sin, the peace of nature was superseded by incessant strife and universal mistrust. This is not a man's world only. He has no right to assume that it is. Instead, it is intended to be a communal sphere. Man should love all living things for two reasons: first, because all are creatures of the God who loves all alike; second, because it is inhuman and unnatural that man should not sympathize with the creatures about him. As to the relationship of man with man, the bounds of human society are the only bounds to heed, not the frontiers of nations with patriots snarling across them, ever mindful of their own group interests. Brotherhood transcends all other relationships --- a brotherhood of the creatures of God, a spiritual kinship.

2.

When William Blake was a child of four, he saw God peer-ing through the window. When he was a small boy on his way to

(1) Reprinted in the Aldine edition of Cowper's works.

school, he saw a tree full of angels near Peckham. Throughout a long life of seventy years, he came and went in a world invisible to the normal eye, in which he saw "Ezekiel sitting on a green bow", in which thistles became old men, in which the sun become Ios, the symbol of time, He wandered in strange lands peopled by pre-Adamite giants and the disembodied spirits who dwelt beyond reality on the frontiers of time and space; he communed with such aspiring beings as fill the apocalyptic pages of the Heaven and Hell of Swedenborg, the strange lore of the Alexandrian Platonists, and The Celestial Hierarchy of the pseudo Dionysius. When in company with earthly friends, he sometimes would begin to sketch furiously from some model invisible to those who, unlike him, had only one world to dwell in instead of four.

Now I a fourfold vision see,
And a fourfold vision is given to me;
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight,
And threefold in soft Beulah's night,
And twofold always. May God us keep
From single vision, and Newton's sleep! (1)

At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to an engraver and afterward studied, though without much effect, at the Royal Academy, where the lectures of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the conventionalized art of the neo-classic school drove him into a fury of indignation and revolt; for Blake insisted that the artist should see not with but through the eye. With the aid of his

(1) Verses, p 133

fourfold vision he painted with utter disregard for tradition of form and composition, reproducing through his engravings the fantastic and awful creatures of a super-earthly imagination, and declaring that to paint from living models was to paint dead things. "He possesses the large range of primordial emotion, from the utter innocence and happy unconsciousness instinct of infancy, up to the fervours of the prophet, inspired to announce, to judge, and to reprobate." (1) In the Songs of Innocence he writes with loving sympathy of children and with the charming ingenuousness which the adult mind can seldom approach, because he himself remained, in many respects, a child until the day of his death. His ethical code, which developed its fullest expression in Jerusalem, is a statement of this childlike faith in a philosophy of infinite love and infinite forgiveness for sins committed. It was a doctrine workable only in that land where his fancy wandered and would have been absolutely impossible in a world uninhabited by the spirits of his vision.

At the time of the French revolution the poet was associated with such English radicals as Priestley, Paine, Holcroft, and Mary Wollstonecraft. It was he who warned Paine to flee after the publication of The Rights of Man drew upon him the indignation of the British government. Blake was the sort of

(1) Introduction, by W. M. Rosseti, p CXII

dreamer who in all ages attach themselves to liberal movements, useless so far as action goes, but, nevertheless, in such accord with the prevailing thought that their presence is tolerated.

In theory he was far more liberal than any of the English group he knew so well, but his theories always remained only theories. Had they been put in operation, one can imagine the horror of even such dissenters as Godwin, Paine, or Mary Wollstonecraft.

Nothing could be more dangerous in studying a mystic than to attempt a thorough interpretation of his symbolism and of his peregrinations in the supernatural. In this discussion I intend to make only a general consideration of the ideas underlying Blake's poetry and to make no effort at an elaborate explanation of a puzzle which it is impossible for any, except for men of similar temperament, to understand or to sympathize with. Blake is related in spirit with such earlier mystics as Plotinus, Pico, and the pseudo Dionysius. He may have derived his immediate inspiration from Swedenborg, but Swedenborg himself belongs to the same group. They may have differed in details; indeed, there is no very close correspondence between those mentioned when it comes to particulars, but their geniuses are in sympathy one with another, regardless of their separation in point of time.

The most significant characteristic that these men have in common is aspiration --- the desire of the ethereal element in man to disengage itself from the earthly and to rise by stages in an almost infinite progression to the pre-eminent perfection, which is God. In the system of Plotinus, the One, God, generates all; but this derived existence is subject to a diminishing completeness, just as the created is always less than the creator. The finite being has the choice of uniting with the corporeal world, or it may, by perfecting itself through ascetic virtues and the contemplation of the Primordial Being, eventually approach it. All life, then, according to Plotinus, is a journey toward the infinite perfection of this Super-Being, and all of us are parts in this scheme of dynamic pantheism.

(1) The soul created by God, and also a part of God, longs to return. It is impossible, says the neo-Platonist, to speak of the Deity's attributes without limiting Him within space and time. The mind of mortals cannot conceive Him. The nearest it can approach is through the system of inferior spirits called angels by biblical seers, emanations by cabbalistic writers, who dwell between earth-born creatures and God. It is this note of aspiration, this love of peopling the world with beautiful myths

(1) Encyclopaedia Britannica art. on Neo-Platonism.

which Blake has in common with the mystics of Alexandria and Judea. His world of idea transcends the corporeal world, because it is peopled with disembodied ghosts which have shaken off the limits of earthly existence. The greatest consummation is to be joined in eternal bliss with the Spirit, to lose one's entity in pure Being. This is almost identical with the system of Swedenborg (1), who describes the conjunction of the soul with the Lord in the second chapter of The Divine Providence.

The correspondence of Blake's system to those which have been so hastily described and his idea of God and his relation to God are repeated so often in his poetry that there is no mistaking his meaning. Let us take, for example, a perfectly clear little poem with an idea apparent and familiar to every lover of the poet.

Ah, Sunflower, weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime,
Where the traveller's journey is done;

Where youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgins shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sunflower wishes to go! (2)

The note of aspiration is very apparent. The humanitarianism of Blake is not based, as in Cowper, on the spiritual kinship of

(1) "This conjunction (with the Lord) by continued approach may go on increasing to eternity, and with the angels it does increase to eternity." The Divine Providence, Chapter II, Paragraph 32.

(2) Ah Sunflower, p 108, Rosetti edition

man in the love of a Creator with a separate entity, but it is based on the loss of the soul's personality in a Deity of pure idea.

This union of God is described in Blake's poem, To Mr. Butts (1), when he says we descend to earth like infants and that life is but a shadow of reality. Heavenly men are bringing light to the expanding eyes of the visionary, who is the poet himself. Gradually these men become one, and the synthetic man begins to infold within himself the limbs of the poet, so that all earthly dross and clay are purged in the purifying light of the One. On earth we are but faint shadows of the divine, just as everything, even the sands on the shore, are parts of the great Whole.

In the same tone speaks the little black boy in The Songs of Innocence to whom Blake's heart goes out with all the tenderness of his gentle and erratic nature. We are put on earth a little space, (2) the black boy's mother tells him, so that we may bear the beams of love.

And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

When our souls are able to bear the celestial radiance, the

- (1) Ibid., p. 127,
(2) Little Black Boy, p 81

clouds will vanish. The black race is imprisoned in a black cloud, the white in a white cloud, but both have the same opportunity to make the long journey to ideal bliss and to a far less tawdry heaven than Calvinism places before our eyes.

What is the place of man in this welter of reality and unreality, of objects indiscriminately mingled with ideas, in this world where thistles are old men and winds are the rustling of angels' wings? Though the material world presents itself to the eye as plural, as if it were made up of many objects and individualities, all are a part of the One. His answer to any question concerning the position of man is given in Songs of Innocence. "Can I see another's woe?" he asks, and not also feel that sorrow as intensely as if it were his own. Can there be any feeling but compassion and a desire to give relief when one sees a fellow in distress?

He (God) doth give his Joy to all;
He becomes an infant small;
He becomes a man of woe;
He doth feel the sorrow too. (1)

The brotherhood of man is a mystical brotherhood. The human race is enveloped in a greater, because God feels our sorrow and can become a man of suffering, even as He enters into the angels in the system of Swedenborg. (2)

- (1) On Another's Sorrow, p 94
- (2) The Divine Providence, Heaven and Hell

This, then, is the basis for Blake's humanitarianism. Nothing lives for itself alone. In The Book of Thel, the daughters of the Seraphim lead round their flocks, but the youngest is sad and wonders why these earthly beauties must fade. She talks with the lily of the valley, the worm, the cloud, and even the clod; and each preaches to her a lesson of infinite love. She laments to the cloud that one day she must become the food of worms, to which it replies,

Then if thou art the food of worms, O virgin of the skies,
How great thy use, how great they blessing!

Everything that lives
Lives not alone nor for itself. (1)

Into this altruistic fraternity which includes not only living things but those things which seem to the mortal eye inorganic, even the devil himself may enter, because he, too, is a part of God. (2) There must be in this life infinite sinning so that there may be infinite forgiving. There could be no mercy if there were no poor. There could be no mercy if all were happy. Hence, evil is a part of the world scheme, because it gives all things a chance to be more humane, more gentle, more godly. (3) Man is not an independent being, nor is he alone the favorite of God. He is but one creature in many millions who bask in the celestial effulgence; and all the feelings of the higher altruism are put within his ken that he may be regenerated and cleansed and

(1) The Book of Thel, p 72-3

(2) The Little Vagabond

(3) The Human Abstract and Jerusalem.

that he may have the opportunity to climb to spiritual perfection.

With such a philosophical justification for humanitarianism democracy in nature must necessarily follow. All creatures must live together in mutual toleration and, more than that, in mutual love. Every evil, every cruelty, is to be accepted thankfully, for they are present in the world that our finer feelings may be aroused. The lot of all creatures is alike.

Am not I
A fly like thee?
Or art not thou
A man like me? (1)

In Auguries of Innocence he enumerates the ways in which man abuses the lower animals. All heaven rages at the sight of caged bird. A skylark wounded causes a cherub to stop his singing. A horse misused, a dog starved, a fly wantonly killed --- all crimes as enormous as those which Lafayette was fighting across the channel. Blake goes further than any humanitarian of his time. Cowper permitted the killing of an animal in self-defense, but in Blake's world of ideas such a possibility seems not to have presented itself. All hunting is wrong. No animal may be pursued under any circumstances, because it is contrary to celestial compassion.

(1) The Fly, p 105

Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from hell a human soul.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain doth tear ...

And last of all, he includes the slave, for the poor man's far-thing is worth more than all the gold in Africa. Auguries of Innocence is the benedictine rule of humanitarianism. It is a formless piece of verse with no intrinsic merit; as a matter of fact, it seems like a score of couplets put down at random and finally herded together in one poem. But it sums up in those couplets exactly what the humanitarians of the century had been preparing for. If Blake in the mass of his poetical works illustrates the sum total of romantic progress during the eighteenth century, (1) this one bit of verse illustrates the humanitarian progress over the same length of time.

Blake's work, therefore, is the culmination of all that has been. Beyond his inclusiveness it was impossible to go. Man and beast and clod are parts of the divine and mystic whole --- joint sharers in a world where evil exists, because it aids the earthly creatures to escape corporeal existence. Cowper sang the brotherhood of the animate creatures of God. He was a cosmopolite, a lover of all living creatures, and a relentless foe to oppression, whether it were oppression of slave or the

(1) Unpublished lecture notes of Prof. S. P. Sherman

hunted animals of the forest. He sympathized with revolution so long as it stayed within the bounds of constitutional progression. He believed firmly that the ethical laws were laid down forever in the book that God had given to man as his earthly guide. Blake sang the brotherhood of the animate and inanimate creatures in God. Sometimes he seems to believe in a personal deity or, at least, one with some human attributes. More often he is enamoured with a progressive pantheism. He sympathized with revolution because he could not, as he so often says, see another suffer without suffering at the same time. His ethical system finds no foundation in any book. His whole philosophy is based upon a neo-Platonic system of love and of an inclusive God whose whole attitude toward the faint shadows of the real world is one of paternal affection. A golden age will come when all shall be regenerated and shall become brothers in the great kinship.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold,
And pitying the tender cries
And walking round the fold
Saying: Wrath by His meekness,
And by his health sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep;

For, washed in life's river,
My bright main forever,
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold. (1)

3.

In the discussion of William Cowper's poetry and life, I have shown how humanitarianism was not only compatible with his nature but was also congenial to the Calvinistic beliefs which he had adopted after his first attack of madness. In the discussion of William Blake's poetry and life, I have shown how humanitarianism was congenial to his Christian-neo-Platonic mysticism. In the discussion of Erasmus Darwin's poetry and the elaborate notes which he attaches to his works, I shall show how congenial humanitarianism was to his scientific temper.

Darwin was graduated from Cambridge, which had been, and still is, the school of his family, and early in his career he evinced the scientific talent which has always been apparent among his people. Several Darwins had shown a marked aptitude for botanical investigation before his time, so that his relation with eighteenth century science appears not to have been caused solely by an individual bent. From Cambridge he went to Edinburgh for his medical instruction, settling, after proceeding to his degree, at Nottingham and later moving to Lichfield, where he built up a practice which brought him both fame

and fortune. There he became a member of an intellectual group. He met Jean Jacques Rousseau during his English sojourn, and corresponded with him after his return to his own country.

Among the citizens of Lichfield he practised his profession diligently and tirelessly, winning for himself the sobriquet of "the benevolent" because of his gruff but kindly labor among the poor and the impecunious lower clergy of the diocese. He despised cant, it is said, but he was always actively helpful to the needy. He did not possess Cowper's emotional religiosity; yet his life of practical charity was much like that of the poet of Olney. At Lichfield he established a dispensary and constructed a botanical garden which afterward gave him the inspiration for his largest poetical work.

His principal interest for the modern is certainly not because he was a great scientist or a great poet, nor is it because his personality was so conspicuous as to make him live in the memory of succeeding ages. It is because in science he was an early propounder of evolutionism, in which field his grandson later became famous. He believed with Lamarck that animals purposefully adapt themselves to their surroundings (1), whereas the theory of his grandson, Charles Darwin, was just the opposite. Nature forces the adaptation. The animal or plant is the passive object of external forces. In Erasmus Darwin, however, we can see how the romantic theology of Blake and the

(1) Temple of Nature, canto II L 50-1

Calvinistic theology of Cowper would have been uncongenial. Science to him was far from an unemotional study, but he always tries to base his system upon an inductive observation of life. He is near to the deists in his religious beliefs and without the enthusiasm of the two men just studied.

His poetry is written in the closed heroic couplet of Pope, and very good poetry it is, so far as prosody is concerned. It has a dignity and a sonorousness that make it pleasing to the modern ear, but it fails to excite any interest nowadays, just as Garth's Dispensary with its discussion of contemporary scientific facts leaves the reader as drowsy as if he had taken an opiate. There is beauty in some of his lines and even distinction of diction; there are emotional passages, too, as he tries to endow the plants with the same erotic character that animals possess. Yet the history of poetry shows that human experience, human feeling, human aspiration, not scientific facts, are the true subjects for poetical expression. A true poem should strike a responsive note in the breast of the reader, and Darwin leaves him tranquil with his intellect unstimulated and with his emotions unappeased. His poetical theory he observes meticulously enough, that the subjects of verse should be concrete and that such a subject

only is suitable for poetry. (1) The truly sublime, he says, is best expressed in prose, and abstractions are abhorrent to the true poet. Perhaps this explains why Darwin is ever anxious to personify in order to be as close as possible on every occasion to the concrete. But no subject is likely to cause a response in the reader when he must constantly have the matter of the poem explained to him by a series of notes, and every page of Erasmus Darwin presents to the eye a few verses and a solid mass of explanatory matter.

In this study the principle most apropos is the Darwinian theory of vital democracy. Blake and Cowper establish their democracy in God. Darwin establishes his democracy in physical nature. Blake would have us love all things, because all are parts of a One to which everything aspires to be joined. Darwin would remind us that the experience of all living things is the same. Regeneration is purely physical. Plants have the same feelings as animals.

Life was spontaneously generated in the beginning, and after that time has been continued by reproduction. The substance from which all things are created is never destroyed but undergoes a perpetual transmutation.

The wrecks of Death are but a change of forms. (2)

(1) Loves of the Plants, vol II Botanic Garden, Interlude, Canto 1 and 11, p 62-3.

(2) Temple of Nature, IV, L 397

All are alike in the toils of the inexorable rule of life. When a monarch or a mushroom dies, the organic matter remains inert for a while. (1) Then from the body springs new life, spontaneously generated from the decaying mass. Mountain, valley, and tree flourish through the material that once existed in another form.

Thus the tall mountains, that emboss the lands
Are mighty monuments of past delight. (2)

The titanic battle, however, between life and death goes on with each trying to conquer the other. Life builds. Death destroys. In this perpetual conflict Darwin sees

The immense munificence of Nature's Lord! (3)

The laws of nature are the creation of God and are immutable. Man may discover the truth through his reason by a study of the external world. But Darwin does not accept entirely the deistic position, for he follows pretty closely at times the biblical histories.

In the physical scheme that the poet-physician builds up the attributes of sympathy and sensibility hold an important place. It is true that man has a larger proportion of talents than the other creatures of the universe; but he is, nevertheless,

(1) Ibid, IV, L 383, cf. note p 160.

(2) Ibid, L 446 - 50

(3) Ibid, L 456

like them, the creature of nature and must live according to the rules. Men and beasts alike possess "volitions", which differ only in degree. These volitions are the agents through which all life selects or rejects means to a desired end. Modern science would term this quality instinct, for it is the same motivating force which prompts a bird to line its nest before laying its eggs and which causes the bee to store up honey. In these volitions lies the resemblance between man and beast. (1)

Wise to the present, nor to future blind,
They link the reasoning reptile with mankind!
--- Stoðp, selfish Pride! survey they kindred forms,
They brother Emmets, and thy sister Worms! (2)

To show how all organic life is prompted by similar emotions, Darwin wrote The Loves of the Plants, an interminable poem in which he describes the generation of plant life, applying to vegetable "amours" the same terminology that he would apply to human passion, the same terminology for plant life as animal life. Both the dormouse and the tulip hibernate in winter. Plants protect themselves in an active as well as a passive way against their enemies. He demonstrates by experiment that plant life is sensitive to light and darkness and to certain stimuli of pleasure and pain. They adapt themselves to their

- (1) Temple of Nature III l 401
(2) Ibid, l 431

surroundings. In The Temple of Nature the courtship of the flowers becomes fast and furious while the gay vegetables engage in "clandestine loves" and quiver with amorous woes.

The wakeful Anther in his silken bed
O'er the pleased Stigma bows his waxen head;
With meeting lips and mingling smiles they sup
Ambrosial dewdrops from the nectar'd cup;
Or buoy'd in air the plummy Lover springs,
And seeks his panting bride on Hymen-wings. (1)

The analogy between plant and animal life is never forgotten. The mimosa has a "nice sense" and from every touch chastely withdraws. (2) "She" shuts her eyes at approaching night and feels throughout her whole being the approach of a storm. It may be said, of course, that Darwin was speaking figuratively, and so he was; but he supports his couplets as usual with elaborate notes, thereby proving his thesis to his own satisfaction. His verses are based very often upon his own observations and conclusions which he obtained from experiments, and his books contain the jottings of a scientist converted into poetry and decorated with poetical language.

In this physical world where men, women, plants, and animals are composed of the same matter, sympathy and benevolence are the highest emotions and the most praiseworthy, just as certainly as they are in the ideal world of William Blake. They are the foundations for universal love, of which Darwin had his

(1) Temple of Nature II l 265

(2) Loves of the Plants, I l 299

share; for he, like the other poets discussed, hated slavery, whether political or bodily.

The Seraph, Sympathy, from Heaven descends.

We are in such close accord with the other beings of the universe that "people of delicate fibres" have been known, when seeing others in pain, to feel pain in the same parts of their bodies as those injured (3). "Children," he writes, "should be taught in their early education to feel for all the remediable evils, which they observe in others; but they should at the same time be taught sufficient firmness of mind not entirely to destroy their own happiness by their sympathizing with the numerous irremediable evils, which exist in the present system of the world; as by indulging that kind of melancholy they decrease the sum total of human happiness; which is so far rather reprehensible than commendable." (2)

The purpose of this study of Blake, Cowper, and Darwin has been to see how humanitarianism manifested itself in three such different personalities --- the one a mystic, the second a religious enthusiast, the third a scientist. By virtue of their very diversity, they should occupy the most important place

(1) Temple of Nature, III L 466, note.

(2) Temple of Nature, III note to l. 466.

in any study of this phase of eighteenth century sentimentalism. They show how congenial humanitarianism was to widely different schools of thought and prove that this movement toward a higher form of benevolence was not the exclusive property of any one school, but that it was adaptable and could find a place in almost any philosophy that has long prevailed. To Blake, there was a brotherhood of all creatures in ideal love; to Cowper there was a brotherhood of all creatures in Christian love; to Darwin there was a brotherhood of all things, organic or inorganic, because of their similar physical experience. All three agree, though they have come to their conclusions by such different and devious routes, that no living thing may be mistreated; for the world is communal property. We should live in a society of reciprocal kindness, though it be the ideal kinship of Blake, the spiritual_kinship of Cowper, or the physical kinship of Darwin.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION.

The poetry of Cowper, Blake, and Darwin is the culmination of the eighteenth century tendency to broaden the field of human sympathy and democracy. It shows very conclusively how compatible humanitarianism was to greatly diversified types of thought and how it found itself in complete accord with the spiritual in Cowper, the mystic in Blake, and the scientific in Darwin. It shows that humanitarianism was not the property of a single group but of many which, by traversing vastly different paths, arrived at the same conclusion, that all must live together in harmony and mutual accord, because the experiences of life, though differing in degree, are essentially the same in all creatures. The positions of these three poets illustrate in a remarkable manner the eighteenth century desire for a larger and more inclusive democracy and a firm belief in universal communism.

I have shown how the seventeenth century held the view that the little groups, the aristocracies of blood and intellect, loitering in the ante-rooms of a restored court, depending for

their very existence on a patron's gift, excursioning promiscuously into the fields of art, literature, and science, were the only members of the human race that really counted. Theirs was the very spirit one should expect to find surrounding a monarch whose willing genius had been trained in the royal French philosophy of divine right. Society was exclusive. Nature meant human nature as they observed it in smart drawing rooms. The great mass of humanity they ignored. They accepted the good things of earth as their own due and looked upon all other living things as so many interesting but inferior creatures whom they might study, dissect, or destroy. The "noble savage" was a literary convention of the heroic stage or the object of the competitive zeal of warring sects.

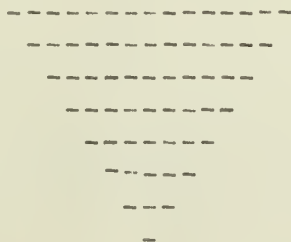
This attitude was caused by the suddenness with which the problems of physical phenomena presented themselves to human curiosity. Pseudo-science was partly to blame for the indifference of the century to suffering and the rights of the majority. Yet pseudo-science was also partly the cause of the changing point of view. The world was full of mysteries, and the seventeenth century abhorred mysteries. Investigation proceeded heartlessly, but it eventually showed the investigator the similarity of human experience. The conception of nature

began to broaden. The conventional idea of Christian brotherhood began to revive. The oppression of slaves is contrary to Christian precepts. But the energetic investigators also enlarged their idea of nature and observed the organic and psychological resemblance between races. Consequently, to Addison and Defoe oppression of one race by another was abhorrent on both natural and Christian grounds. Hence, the belief became prevalent that this is not the world of only a few but of all men, regardless of color or place of residence.

At the same time the deist, rejecting revelatory evidence for the knowledge gained through science and reason, came to the conclusion that the world is ruled by a kindly and loving deity; and, of course, cruelty could not be pleasing to such a ruler. Man should act upon His example and be kind. All men are essentially alike, and even animals should be treated with compassion. At the same time the nature poets, a few of whom belonging to the aforementioned class, began to write of the real country, rejecting the neo-classicist's desire to domesticate Attic shepherds in an English landscape. Animals were a part of the re-discovered genre, and the natural affection that British poets have always felt for animal life again found expression. Man, said the first nature poets, is a benevolent dictator.

With this idea gaining new literary adherents, the century progressed through both logic and emotion to new conceptions of the relations between the creatures. Hunting, the favorite English sport, was an institution for which apology must be made. Only the non-social animals might be pursued. At the time of the American war, we find Humphrey Primatt applying the doctrine of Rousseauism --- that man is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness --- to all living creatures; and the compassion of the earlier poets became an active sympathy in Cowper. The democracy of the creatures had arrived. The idea of Christian communism was expanding. In the neo-Platonic philosophy of Blake, the relationship of man, beast, and clod is based upon the kinship of all things in the One. There is no favoritism in God, for nothing is without a use; and love and altruism are the highest goods. In the deity all --- man, worms, clods, and the devil --- are parts. Darwin arrives at the same conclusion. He championed the cause of altruism, but his method was that of scientific investigation instead of mystical experience. There is similarity, he found, in the vital experience of all things, and even the mountain is but a record of "past joys". His life he made a practical observance of this scientific democracy.

What has been the result of this humanitarian movement which bent all philosophies to its purpose and which became so congenial to such different personalities and temperaments? The power of the movement at the end of the century had just begun in poetry, liberal thought, and practical reform. It enriched poetry and gave us much literature of a high quality which otherwise we should have missed. Because of its constant emphasis on altruism and benevolence it secured in England a hospitable reception for liberal thought, such as the utilitarianism of the nineteenth century. It was responsible for the abolition of the slave trade. It advanced the cause of a larger democracy and a higher communism, not, of course, without an enormous amount of nauseating cant, and prepared the way for the practical reforms of the revolutionary era to come.



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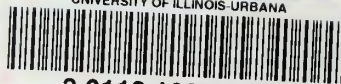
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